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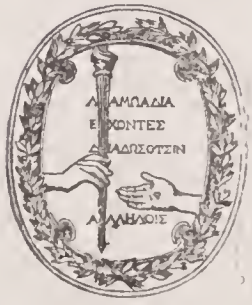
"'NEVER DRAW IT IN AN UNWORTHY CAUSE'"

# A VIRGINIA CAVALIER

BY

MOLLY ELLIOT SEAWELL

ILLUSTRATED



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"Nature made Washington great—but he made himself virtuous"

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# A VIRGINIA CAVALIER

## CHAPTER I

*"Nature made Washington great; but he made himself virtuous."*

The sun shines not upon a lovelier land than midland Virginia. Great rivers roll seaward through rich woodlands and laughing corn-fields and fair meadow lands. Afar off, the misty lines of blue hills shine faintly against the deeper blue of the sky. The atmosphere is singularly clear, and the air wholesome and refreshing.

Never was it more beautiful than on an afternoon in late October of 1746. The Indian summer was at hand—that golden time when Nature utters a solemn "Hush!" to the season, and calls back the summer-time for a little while. The scene was full of peace—the broad and placid Rappahannock shimmering in the sun, its bosom unvexed except by the sails of an occasional grain-laden vessel, making its way quietly and slowly down the blue river. The quiet home-

steads lay basking in the fervid sun, while woods and streams and fields were full of those soft, harmonious country sounds which make a kind of musical silence.

A mile or two back from the river ran the King's highway — a good road for those days, and showing signs of much travel. It passed at one point through a natural clearing, on the top of which grew a few melancholy pines. The road came out of the dense woods on one side of this open space, and disappeared in the woods on the other side.

On this October afternoon, about three o'clock, a boy with a gun on his shoulder and a dog at his heels, came noiselessly out of the woods and walked up to the top of the knoll. The day was peculiarly still; but only the quickest ear could have detected the faint sound the boy made, as with a quick and graceful step he marched up the hill — for George Washington was a natural woodsman from his young boyhood, and he had early learned how to make his way through forest and field without so much as alarming the partridge on her nest. No art or craft of the woods, whether of white man or Indian, was unknown to him; and he understood Nature, the mighty mother, in all her civilized and uncivilized moods.

A full game-bag on his back showed what his employment had been, but now he gave himself over to the rare but delicious idleness which occasionally overtakes everybody who tramps long through the woods. He sat down and took off his cap, revealing his handsome, blond head. The dog, a beautiful long-eared setter, laid his nose confidentially upon his master's knee, and blinked solemnly, with his large, tawny eyes, into his master's blue ones. The boy's eyes were remarkable — a light but beautiful blue, and softening a face that, even in boyhood, was full of resolution and even sternness. His figure was as near perfection as the human form could be—tall, athletic, clean of limb and deep of chest, singularly graceful, and developed, as the wise old Greeks developed their bodies, by manly exercises and healthful brain-work and the cleanest and most wholesome living. Neither the face nor the figure could belong to a milksop. The indications of strong passions, of fierce loves and hates and resentments, were plain enough. But stronger even than these was that noble expression which a purity of soul and a commanding will always writes upon the human countenance. This boy was a gentleman at heart and in soul—not because he had no temptation to be otherwise, but because he chose to be a gentleman.

He sat in silence for half an hour, the dog resting against him, the two communing together as only a boy and a dog can. The sun shone, the wind scarcely ruffled a dying leaf. A crow circled around in the blue air, uttering a caw that was lost in the immensity of the heavens. The silence seemed to grow deeper every moment, when, with a quick movement, George laid his ear to the ground. To an unpractised ear there was not the slightest break in the quiet, but to the boy's trained hearing something was approaching along the highway, which induced him to sit still awhile longer. It was some time in coming, for the heavy coaches in those days hung upon wide leather straps, and with broad-tired wheels made much commotion as they rolled along, to say nothing of the steady beat of the horses' hoofs upon the hard road. George's eyes were as quick as his ears, but he caught nothing of the approaching travellers until the cavalcade flashed suddenly into the sun, and with its roar and rattle seemed to spring out of the ground.

First came four sturdy negro outriders, in a gorgeous livery of green and gold, and mounted upon stout bay horses, well adapted for hard travel. Then came a magnificent travelling-coach, crest emblazoned, which would not have dis-

credited the king's levee. It was drawn by four superb roans, exactly matched in form, color, and action. They took the road as if they had just warmed up to their work; but from the dust on the whole cavalcade it was plain they had travelled far that day. With heads well in the air the horses threw their legs together with a style and at a gait that showed them to be of the best blood in the horse kingdom. A black postilion in green and gold rode the off horse of the leaders, while a black coachman handled the reins. On the box, next the coachman, sat a white man, evidently a servant out of livery. One glance told that he was an old soldier. He had at his side one of the huge holsters of the day, in which he carried a pair of long horse-pistols, and a stout wooden box, upon which he rested his feet, showed that the party had means of defence had it been attacked.

George was so stunned with admiration at the splendor of the equipage that he scarcely glanced at the interior of the coach until the sunlight flashed upon something that fairly dazzled him. It was a diamond-hilted dress-sword, worn by a gentleman of about fifty, who sat alone upon the back seat. The gorgeous sword-hilt was the only thing about him that shone or glinted, for his brown travelling-suit was as studiously simple

as his equipage was splendid. He wore plain silver buckles at his knees and upon his handsome, high-arched feet, and his hair, streaked with gray, was without powder, and tied into a club with a black ribbon.

One glance at his face fixed George's attention. It was pale and somewhat angular, unlike the type of florid, high-colored Virginia squires with which George was familiar. He had been handsome in his youth, and was still handsome, with a stately, grave beauty; but even a boy could see that this man had had but little joy in life.

From the moment that George's eyes fell upon this gentleman he looked upon nothing else. Neither the great coach nor the superb horses had any power to attract his gaze, although never, in all his short life, had he seen anything so splendid. His mother had a coach, and so had most of the people round about, but all had a common air of having once been handsome, and of having reached the comfortable, shabby-genteel stage. And many persons drove four horses to these great lumbering vehicles, but all four would not be worth one of the gallant roans that trotted along the road so gayly.

It was out of sight in a few minutes, and in a few minutes more it was out of hearing; but in

that time George, who was quick-witted, had shrewdly guessed the name and rank of the gentleman with the plain clothes and the diamond-hilted sword. It was the great Earl of Fairfax — the soldier, the wit, the rich nobleman — who for some mysterious reason had chosen to come to this new land, and to build a lodge in the wilderness. The boy had often heard his mother, Madam Washington, speak of Earl Fairfax. Meeting with him was one of the events of that great journey she had made in her girlhood to England, where for a time she lived in the house of her brother Joseph Ball, at Cookham, in Berkshire, who had left his Virginia home and had taken up his residence in England. Here Mary Ball had met Augustine Washington, then in England upon affairs connected with his property. Augustine Washington was one of the handsomest men of his day, and from him his eldest son George inherited the noble air and figure that marked him. Mary Ball was a Virginia beauty, and although admired by many Englishmen of distinction, she rather chose to marry Augustine Washington, albeit he had been married before, and had two motherless boys. In England, therefore, were they married, sailing soon after for Virginia, and within twelve years Mrs. Washington was a

widow with five children. She loved to talk to her children of those happy English days, when she had first pledged herself to Augustine Washington. It had also been the only time of excitement in her quiet life, and she had met many of the wits and cavaliers and belles of the reign of George the Second. She sometimes spoke of Lord Fairfax, but always guardedly; and George had conceived the idea that his mother perhaps knew Lord Fairfax better, and the reasons for his abandonment of his own country, than she cared to tell.

He began to wonder, quite naturally, where the earl was bound; and suddenly it came to him in a flash—"He is going to pay his respects to my mother." In another instant he was on his feet and speeding like a deer through the woods towards home.

The house at Ferry Farm, which was home to him, was a good four miles by the road, but by paths through the woods and fields, and a foot-bridge across a creek, it was barely a mile. It took him but a short time to make it, but before he could reach the house he saw the coach and outriders dash into sight and draw up before the porch. The old soldier jumped from the box and opened the door and let down the steps, and the earl descended in state. On the porch stood Uncle

Jasper, the venerable black butler, in a suit of homespun, with a long white apron that reached from his chin to his knees. George saw him bowing and ushering the earl in. The outriders loosened their horses' girths, and, after breathing them, led them to the watering-trough in the stable-lot back of the house. They then watered the coach-horses, the coachman sitting in solitary magnificence on his box, while the old soldier stretched his legs by walking about the lot. George saw this as he came through the stable way, his dog still at his heels. Uncle Jasper was waiting for him on the back porch.

"De madam," he began, in a mysterious whisper, "will want you ter put on yo' Sunday clo'es fo' you come in ter see de Earl o' Fairfax. He's in de settin'-room now."

George understood very well, and immediately went to his room to change his hunting-clothes, which were the worse for both dirt and wear. It was a ceremonious age, and the formalities of dress and manners were very strictly observed.

Meanwhile, in the sitting-room, on opposite sides of the fireplace, sat Madam Washington and the earl. Truly, the beauty that had distinguished Mary Ball remained with Madam Washington. Her figure was slight and deli-

cate (not from her had her eldest son inherited his brawn and muscle), and in her severely simple black gown she looked even slighter than usual. Her complexion was dazzlingly fair, and little rings of chestnut hair escaped from her widow's cap; but her fine blue eyes were the counterpart of her eldest son's. The room was plainly furnished, even for the times, but scrupulously neat. A rag-carpet covered the middle of the floor, while around the edges the polished planks were bare. In one corner a small harpsichord was open, with music on the rack. Dimity curtains shaded the small-paned windows, and a great fire sparkled in the large fireplace. Over the mantel hung the portrait of a handsome young man in a satin coat with lace ruffles. This was a portrait of Augustine Washington in his youth. Opposite it was a portrait of Madam Washington as a girl—a lovely young face and figure. There were one or two other portraits, and a few pieces of silver upon a mahogany buffet opposite the harpsichord—relics of Wakefield, the Westmoreland plantation where George was born, and of which the house had burned to the ground in the absence of the master, and much of the household belongings had been destroyed.

The earl's eyes lingered upon the girlish por-

trait of Madam Washington as the two sat gravely conversing.

"It was thus you looked, madam, when I first had the honor of knowing you in England," he said.

"Time and sorrow and responsibilities have done their work upon me, my lord," answered Madam Washington. "The care of five children, that they may be brought up to be worthy of their dead father, the making of good men out of four boys, the task of bringing up an only daughter to be a Christian gentlewoman, is no mean task, I assure you, and taxes my humble powers."

"True, madam," responded the earl, with a low bow; "but I know of no woman better fitted for so great an undertaking than Madam Washington."

Madam Washington leaned forward and bowed in response, and then resumed her upright position, not once touching the back of her chair.

"And may I not have the pleasure of seeing your children, madam?" asked the earl, who cared little for children generally, but to whom the children of her who had once been the beautiful Mary Ball were of the greatest interest.

"Certainly, my lord," answered Madam Wash-

ington, rising, "if you will excuse me for a moment while I fetch them."

The earl, left alone, rose and walked thoughtfully to the portrait of Mary Ball and looked at it for several minutes. His face, full of melancholy and weariness, grew more melancholy and weary. He shook his head once or twice, and made a motion with his hand as if putting something away from him, and then returned to his chair by the fire. He looked into the blaze and tapped his foot softly with his dress-sword. This beautiful, grave widow of forty, her heart wrapped up in her children, was not the girl of eighteen years before. There was no turning back of the leaves of the book of life for her. She had room now for but one thought in her mind, one feeling in her heart—her children.

Presently the door opened, and Madam Washington re-entered with her usual sedate grace. Following her was a young girl of fourteen, her mother's image, the quaintest, daintiest little maiden imaginable, her round, white arms bare to the elbow, from which muslin ruffles fell back, a little muslin cap covering her hair, much lighter than her mother's, and her shy eyes fixed upon the floor. Behind her were three sturdy, handsome boys of twelve, ten, and eight, as alike as peas in a pod. In those days the children of

gentlepeople were neither pert and forward nor awkward and ashamed at meeting strangers. Drilled in a precise etiquette, they knew exactly what to do, which consisted chiefly in making many low bows to their elders, and answering in respectful monosyllables such questions as were asked them. They learned in this way a grace and courtesy quite unknown to modern children.

"My daughter, Mistress Betty Washington, my Lord of Fairfax," was Madam Washington's introduction.

The earl rose from his chair and made the little girl a bow as if she were the princess royal, while Mistress Betty, scorning to be outdone, courtesied to the floor in response, her full skirt making a balloon as she sunk and rose in the most approved fashion.

"I am most happy to meet you, Mistress Betty," said he, to which Mistress Betty, in a quavering voice—for she had never before seen an earl, or a coach like the one he came in—made answer:

"Thank you, my lord."

The three boys were then introduced as Samuel, John, and Charles. To each the earl made a polite bow, but not so low as to Mistress Betty. The boys returned the bow without the slight-

est shyness or awkwardness, and then took their places in silence behind their mother's chair. They exchanged keen glances, though, among themselves, and wondered when they would be allowed to depart, so that they might further investigate the coach and the four roan horses. Madam Washington spoke.

"I am every moment expecting my eldest son George; he is out hunting to-day, and said that he would return at this hour, and he is always punctual to the minute. It will be a severe disappointment to me if I should not have the pleasure of showing your lordship my eldest son."

It did not take a very acute person to note the tone of pride in madam's voice when she said "my eldest son."

"It will be a disappointment to me also, madam," replied the earl. "I hope he is all that the eldest son of such a mother should be."

Madam Washington smiled one of her rare smiles. "'Tis all I can do, my lord, to keep down the spirit of pride, so unbecoming to all of us, when I regard my son George. My other sons, I trust, will be as great a comfort to me, but they are still of too tender years for me to depend upon." Then, turning to the three boys, she gave them a look which meant permission to leave the room. The boys bowed gravely to

their mother, gravely to the earl, and walked more gravely out of the room. Once the door was softly closed they made a quick but noiseless dash for the back door, and were soon outside examining the roans and the great coach, chattering like magpies to the negro outriders, until having made the acquaintance of the old soldier, Lance by name, they were soon hanging about him, begging that he would tell them about a battle.

Meanwhile, within the sitting-room, Madam Washington heard a step upon the uncarpeted stairs. A light came into her eyes as she spoke.

"There is my son now, going to his room. He will join us shortly. I cannot tell you, my lord, how great a help I have in my son. As you know, my step-son, Captain Laurence Washington, late of the British army, since leaving his Majesty's service and marrying Mistress Anne Fairfax, has lived at the Hunting Creek place, which he has called Mount Vernon, in honor of his old friend and comrade-in-arms, Admiral Vernon. It is a good day's journey from here, and although Laurence is most kind and attentive, I have had to depend, since his marriage, upon my son George to take his father's place in the conduct of my affairs and in my household. It is he who reads family prayers night and morning

and presides with dignity at the foot of my table. It might seem strange to those who do not know his character how much I rely upon his judgment, and he but fifteen. Even my younger sons obey and respect him, and my daughter Betty does hang upon her brother. 'Tis most sweet to see them together." At which Mistress Betty smiled and glanced at the earl, and saw so kind a look in his eyes as he smiled back at her that she looked at him quite boldly after that.

"It is most gratifying to hear of this, madam," replied the earl; "but it is hardly merciful of you to a childless old man, who would give many worldly advantages had he but a son to lean upon in his old age."

"You should have married twenty years ago, my lord," answered Madam Washington, promptly.

Something like a gleam of saturnine humor appeared in the earl's eyes at this, but he only replied, dryly, "Perhaps it is not wholly my fault, madam, that I find myself alone in my old age."

At that moment the door opened, and young Washington stood upon the threshold.

## CHAPTER II

The full flood of the sun, now low in the heavens, poured through the western windows upon the figure of the boy standing in the doorway. The room was beginning to darken, and the ruddy firelight, too, fell glowingly upon him.

The earl was instantly roused, and could scarcely persuade himself that the boy before him was only fifteen; seventeen, or even eighteen, would have seemed nearer the mark, so tall and well-developed was he. Like all creatures of the highest breeding, George looked handsomer the handsomer his dress; and although his costume was really simple enough, he had the splendid air that made him always appear to be in the highest fashion. His coat and knee-breeches were of dark-blue cloth, spun, woven, and dyed at home. His waistcoat, however, was of white brocade, and was made of his mother's wedding-gown, Madam Washington having indulged her pride so far as to lay this treasured garment aside for waistcoats for her sons, while

Mistress Betty was to inherit the lace veil and the string of pearls which had gone with the gown.

George's shoebuckles and kneebuckles were much finer than the earl's, being of paste, and having been once worn by his father. His blond hair was made into a club, and tied with a black ribbon, while under his arm he carried a smart three-cornered hat, for the hat made a great figure in the ceremonious bows of the period. His dog, a beautiful creature, stood beside him.

Never in all his life had the Earl of Fairfax seen so noble a boy. The sight of him smote the older man's heart; it flashed through him how easy it would be to exchange all his honors and titles for such a son. He rose and saluted him, as Madam Washington said, in a tone that had pride in every accent:

"My lord, this is my son, Mr. Washington." George responded with one of those graceful inclinations which, years after, made the entrance of Colonel Washington at the Earl of Dunmore's levee at Williamsburg a lesson in grace and good-breeding. Being "Mr. Washington" and the head of the house, it became his duty to speak first.

"I am most happy to welcome you, my lord, to our home."

"THIS IS MY SON, MR. WASHINGTON."

"And I am most happy," said the earl, "to meet once more my old friend, Madam Washington, and the goodly sons and sweet daughter with which she has been blessed."

"My mother has often told us of you, sir, in speaking of her life during the years she spent in England."

"Ah, my lord," said Madam Washington, "I perceive I am no longer young, for I love to dwell upon those times, and to tell my children of the great men I met in England, chiefly through your lordship's kindness."

"It was my good-fortune," said the earl, "to be an humble member of the Spectator Club, and through the everlasting goodness of Mr. Joseph Addison I had the advantage of knowing men so great of soul and so luminous of mind that I think I can never forget them."

"I had not the honor of knowing Mr. Addison. He died before I ever saw England," replied Madam Washington.

"Unfortunately, yes, madam. But of those you knew, Mr. Pope, poor Captain Steele, and even Dean Swift, with all his ferocious wit, his tremendous invective, his savage thirst for place and power, respected Mr. Addison. He was a man of great dignity—not odd and misshapen, like little Mr. Pope, nor frowzy like poor Dick

Steele, nor rude and overbearing like the fierce Dean—but ever gentle, mild, and of a most manly bearing. For all Mr. Addison's mildness, I think there was no man that Dean Swift feared so much. When we would all meet at the club, and the Dean would begin his railing at persons of quality—for he always chose that subject when I was present—Mr. Addison would listen with a smile to the Dean as he lolled over the table in his huge periwig, and roared out in his great rich voice all the sins of all the people, always beginning and ending with Sir Robert Walpole, whom he hated most malignantly. Once, a pause coming in the Dean's talk, Mr. Addison, calmly taking out his snuffbox, and helping himself to a pinch, remarked that he had always thought Dean Swift's chiefest weakness, until he had been assured to the contrary, was his love for people of quality. We each held our breath. Dick Steele quietly removed a pewter mug from the Dean's elbow; Mr. Pope, who sat next Mr. Addison, turned pale and slipped out of his chair; the Dean turned red and breathed hard, glaring at Mr. Addison, who only smiled a little; and then he—the great Dean Swift, the man who could make governments tremble and parliaments afraid; who made duchesses weep from his rude sneers, and great ladies almost go down on their

knees to him—sneaked out of the room at this little thrust from Mr. Addison. For 'twas the man, madam—the honest soul of him—that could cow that great swashbuckler of a genius. Mr. Addison abused no one, and he was exactly what he appeared to be."

"That, indeed, is the highest praise, as it shows the highest wisdom," answered Madam Washington.

George listened with all his mind to this. He had read the *Spectator*, and Mr. Addison's tragedy of "Cato" had been read to him by Mr. Hobby, the Scotch school-master who taught him, and he loved to hear of these great men. The earl, although deep in talk with Madam Washington, was by no means unmindful of the boy, but without seeming to notice him watched every expression of his earnest face.

"I once saw Dean Swift," continued Madam Washington. "It was at a London rout, where I went with my brother's wife, Madam Joseph Ball, when we were visiting in London. He had great dark eyes, and sat in a huge chair, and called ladies of quality 'my dear,' as if they were dairy-maids. And the ladies seemed half to like it and half to hate it. They told me that two ladies had died of broken hearts for him."

"I believe it to be true," replied the earl. "That was the last time the Dean ever saw England. He went to Ireland, and, as he said, 'commenced Irishman in earnest,' and died very miserably. He could not be bought for money, but he could very easily be bribed with power."

"And that poor Captain Steele?"

The earl's grave face was suddenly illuminated with a smile.

"Dear Dick Steele—the softest-hearted, bravest, gentlest fellow — always drunk, and always repenting. There never was so great a sermon preached on drunkenness as Dick Steele himself was. But for drink he would have been one of the happiest, as he was by nature one of the best and truest, gentlemen in the world; but he was weak, and he was, in consequence, forever miserable. Drink brought him to debts and duns and prison and rags and infamy. Ah, madam, 'twould have made your heart bleed, as it made mine, to see poor Dick reeling along the street, dirty, unkempt, his sword bent, and he scarce knowing what he was doing; and next day, at home, where his wife and children were in hunger and cold and poverty, behold him, lying in agony on his wretched bed, weeping, groaning, reproaching himself, and suffering tortures for one hour's wicked indulgence! Then would he

turn gentleman again, and for a long time be our own dear Dick Steele—his wife smiling, his children happy. I love to think on honest Dick at these times. It was then he wrote that beautiful little book, which should be in every soldier's hands, *The Christian Hero*. We could always tell at the club whether Dick Steele were drunk or sober by Mr. Addison's face. When Steele was acting the beast, Mr. Addison sighed often and looked melancholy all the time, and spent his money in taking such care as he could of the poor wife and children. Poor Dick! The end came at last in drunkenness and beastliness; but before he died, for a little while, he was the Dick Steele we loved, and shall ever love."

"And Mr. Pope—the queer little gentleman—who lived at Twickenham, and was so kind to his old mother?"

"Mr. Pope was a very great genius, madam, and had he not been born crooked he would have been an admirable man; but the crook in his body seemed to make a crook in his mind. He died but last year, outliving many strong men who pitied his puny frame. But let me not disparage Mr. Pope. My Lord Chesterfield, who was a very good judge of men, as well as the first gentleman of his time, entertained a high esteem for Mr. Pope."

"I also had the honor of meeting the Earl of Chesterfield," continued Madam Washington, with animation, "and he well sustained the reputation for politeness that I had heard of him, for he made as much of me as if I had been a great lady instead of a young girl from the colonies, whom chance and the kindness of a brother had brought to England, and your lordship's goodness had introduced to many people of note. 'Tis true I saw them but for a glimpse or two, but that was enough to make me remember them forever. I have tried to teach my son Lord Chesterfield's manner of saluting ladies, in which he not only implied the deepest respect for the individual, but the greatest reverence for all women."

"That is true of my Lord Chesterfield," replied the earl, who found it enchanting to recall these friends of his youth with whom he had lived in close intimacy, "and his manners revealed the man. He had also a monstrous pretty wit. There is a great, lumbering fellow of prodigious learning, one Samuel Johnson, with whom my Lord Chesterfield has become most friendly. I never saw this Johnson myself, for he is much younger than the men of whom we are speaking; but I hear from London that he is a wonder of learning, and although almost indigent

will not accept aid from his friends, but works manfully for the booksellers. He has described my Lord Chesterfield as 'a wit among lords, and a lord among wits.' I heard something of this Dr. Johnson, in a late letter from London, that I think most praiseworthy, and affording a good example to the young. His father, it seems, was a bookseller at Lichfield, where on market-days he would hire a stall in the market for the sale of his wares. One market-day, when Samuel was a youth, his father, being ill and unable to go himself, directed him to fit up the book-stall in the market and attend it during the day. The boy, who was otherwise a dutiful son, refused to do this. Many years afterwards, his father being dead, and Johnson, being as he is in great repute for learning, was so preyed upon by remorse for his undutiful conduct that he went to Lichfield and stood bareheaded in the market-place, before his father's old stall, for one whole market-day, as an evidence of his sincere penitence. I hear that some of the thoughtless jeered at him, but the better class of people respected his open acknowledgment of his fault, the more so as he was in a higher worldly position than his father had ever occupied, and it showed that he was not ashamed of an honest parent because he was of a humble class. I

cannot think, madam, of that great scholar, standing all day with bare, bowed head, bearing with silent dignity the remarks of the curious, the jeers of the scoffers, without in spirit taking off my hat to him."

During this story Madam Washington fixed her eyes on George, who colored slightly, but remarked, as the earl paused:

"It was the act of a brave man and a gentleman. There are not many of us who could do it."

Just then the door opened, and Uncle Jasper, bearing a huge tray, entered. He placed it on a round mahogany table, and Madam Washington proceeded to make tea, and offered it to the earl with her own hands.

The earl while drinking his tea glanced first at George and then at pretty little Betty, who, feeling embarrassed at the notice she received, produced her sampler from her pocket and began to work demurely in cross-stitch on it. Presently Lord Fairfax noticed the open harpsichord.

"I remember, madam," he said to Madam Washington, as they gravely sipped their tea together, "that you had a light hand on the harpsichord."

"I have never touched it since my husband's death," answered she, "but my daughter Betty can perform with some skill."

Mistress Betty, obeying a look from her mother, rose at once and went to the harpsichord, never thinking of the ungraceful and disobliging protest of more modern days. She seated herself, and struck boldly into the "The Marquis of Huntley's Rigadoon." She had, indeed, a skilful little hand, and as the touch of her small fingers filled the room with quaint music the earl sat, tapping with his foot to mark the time, and smiling at the little maid's grave air while she played. When her performance was over she rose, and, making a reverence to her mother and her guest, returned to her sampler.

The earl had now spent nearly two hours with his old friend, and the sun was near setting, but he could scarcely make up his mind to leave. The interest he felt in her seemed transferred to her children, especially the two eldest, and the resolve entered his mind that he would see more of that splendid boy. He turned to George and said to him:

"Will you be so good, Mr. Washington, as to order my people to put to my horses, as I find that time has flown surprisingly fast?"

"Will you not stay the night, my lord?" asked Madam Washington. "We can amply accommodate you and your servants."

"Nothing would please me more, madam, but

it is my duty to reach Fredericksburg to-night, where I have business, and I am now seeking a ferry where I can be moved across."

"Then you have not to seek far, sir, for this place is called Ferry Farm; and we have several small boats, and a large one that will easily hold your coach; and, with the assistance of your servants, all of them, as well as your horses, can be ferried over at once."

The earl thanked her, and George left the room promptly to make the necessary arrangements. In a few moments the horses were put to the coach, as the ferry was half a mile from the house; and George, ordering his saddle clapped on his horse, that was just then being brought from the pasture, galloped down to the ferry to superintend the undertaking—not a light one—of getting a coach, eight horses, and eight persons across the river.

The coach being announced as ready, Madam Washington and the earl rose and walked together to the front porch, accompanied by little Mistress Betty, who hung fondly to her mother's hand. Outside stood the three younger boys, absorbed in contemplation of the grandeur of the equipage. They came forward promptly to say good-bye to their mother's guest, and then slipped around into the chimney corner that

they might see the very last of the sight so new to them. Little Betty also disappeared in the house after the earl had gallantly kissed her hand and predicted that her bright eyes would yet make many a heart ache. Left alone on the porch in the twilight with Madam Washington, he said to her very earnestly:

"Madam, I do not speak the language of compliment when I say that you may well be the envy of persons less fortunate than you when they see your children. Of your eldest boy I can truly say I never saw a nobler youth, and I hope you will place no obstacle in the way of my seeing him again. Greenway Court is but a few days' journey from here, and if I could have him there it would be one of the greatest pleasures I could possibly enjoy."

"Thank you, my lord," answered Madam Washington, simply. "My son George has, so far, never caused me a moment's uneasiness, and I can very well trust him with persons less improving to him than your lordship. It is my wish that he should have the advantage of the society of learned and polished men, and your kind invitation shall some day be accepted."

"You could not pay me a greater compliment, madam, than to trust your boy with me, and I shall claim the fulfilment of your promise,"

replied Lord Fairfax. "Farewell, madam; the sincere regard I have cherished during nearly twenty years for you will be extended to your children, and your son shall never want a friend while I live. I do not know that I shall ever travel three days' journey from Greenway again, so this may be our last meeting."

"Whether it be or not, my lord," said Madam Washington, "I can only assure you of my friendship and gratitude for your good-will towards my son."

The earl then respectfully kissed her hand, as he had done little Betty's, and stepped into the coach. With a great smacking of whips and rattle and clatter and bang the equipage rolled down the road in the dark towards the ferry.

A faint moon trembled in the heavens, and it was so dark that torches were necessary on the river-bank. George had dismounted from his horse, and with quiet command had got everything in readiness to transport the cavalcade. The earl, sitting calmly back in the chariot, watched the proceedings keenly. He knew that it required good judgment in a boy of fifteen to take charge of the ferriage of so many animals and men without haste or confusion. He observed that in the short time George had preceded him everything was exactly as it should

be — the large boat drawn up ready for the coach, and two smaller boats and six stalwart negro ferrymen to do the work.

"I have arranged, my lord, with your permission," he said, "to ferry the coach and horses, with your own servants, over first, as it is not worth while taking any risks in crowding the boats; then, when the boats return, the outriders and their horses may return in the large boat."

"Quite right, Mr. Washington," answered the earl, briskly; "your dispositions do credit to you, and I believe you could transport a regiment with equal ease and precision."

George's face colored with pleasure at this. "I shall go on with you myself," he said, "if you will allow me."

The boat was drawn up, a rude but substantial raft was run from the shore to the boat, the horses were taken from the coach, and it was rolled on board by the strong arms of a dozen men. The horses were disposed to balk at getting in the boat, but after a little coaxing trotted quietly aboard; the ferry men, reinforced by two of Lord Fairfax's servants, took the oars, and the boat, followed by two smaller ones, was pulled rapidly across the river. After a few minutes, seeing that everything was going right, George entered the coach, and sat

by the earl's side. The earl lighted his travelling-lamp, and the two sat in earnest conversation. Lord Fairfax wished to find out something more about the boy who had made so strong an impression on him. He found that George had been well taught, and although not remarkable in general literature, he knew more mathematics than most persons of twice his age and opportunities. He had been under the care of the old Scotchman, Mr. Hobby, who was, in a way, a mathematical genius, and George had profited by it.

"And what, may I ask, Mr. Washington, is your plan for the future?"

"I hope, sir," answered George, modestly, "that I shall be able to get a commission in his Majesty's army or navy. As you know, although I am my mother's eldest son, my brother Laurence, of Mount Vernon, is my father's eldest son, and the head of our family. My younger brothers and I have small fortunes, and I would like to see something of the world and some service in arms before I set myself to increasing my part."

"Very creditable to you, and you may count upon whatever influence I have towards getting you a commission in either branch of the military service. I myself served in the Low Coun-

tries under the Duke of Marlborough in my youth, and although I have long since given up the profession of arms I can never lose my interest in it. Your honored mother has promised me the pleasure of your company for a visit at Greenway Court, when we may discuss the matter of your commission at length. I am not far from an old man, Mr. Washington, but I retain my interest in youth, and I like to see young faces about me at Greenway."

"Thank you, my lord," answered George, with secret delight. "I shall not let my mother forget her promise—but she never does that."

"There is excellent sport at Greenway, and I have kept a choice breed of deer-hounds as well as fox-hounds. I brought with me from England a considerable library, and you can, I hope, amuse yourself with a book; but if you cannot amuse yourself with a book, you will always be dependent upon others for your entertainment."

"I am fond of reading—on rainy days," said George, at which candid acknowledgment the earl smiled.

"My man, Lance, is an old soldier; he is an intelligent man for his station and a capital fencer. You may learn something from him with the foils. He was with me at the siege of Bouchain."

What a delightful vista this opened before George, who was, like other healthy minded boys, devoted to reading and hearing of battles, and fencing and all manly sports! He glanced at Lance, standing erect and soldierly, as the boat moved through the water. He meant to hear all about the siege of Bouchain from Lance before the year was out, and blushed when he was obliged to acknowledge to himself that he had never heard of the siege of Bouchain.

## CHAPTER III

Next morning, as usual, George was up and on horseback by sunrise. Until this year he had ridden five miles a day each way to Mr. Hobby's school; but now he was so far ahead of the school-master's classes that he only went a few times a week, to study surveying and the higher mathematics, and to have the week's study at home marked out for him. Every morning, however, it was his duty to ride over the whole plantation before breakfast, and to report the condition of everything in it to his mother. Madam Washington was one of the best farmers in the colony, and it was her custom, after hearing George's account at breakfast, to mount her horse and ride over the place also, and give her orders for the day.

The first long lances of light were just tipping the woods and the river when George came out and found his horse held by Billy Lee, a negro lad of about his own age, who was his

body-servant and shadow.* Billy was a chocolate-colored youth, the son of Aunt Sukey the cook and Uncle Jasper the butler. He had but one idea and one ideal on earth, and that was "Marse George." It was in vain that Madam Washington, the strictest of disciplinarians, might lay her commands on Billy. Until he had found out what "Marse George" wanted him to do, Billy seemed unconscious of having got any orders. Madam Washington, who could awe much older and wiser persons than Billy, had often sent for the boy, when he was regularly taken into the house, and after reasoning with him, kindly explaining to him that both "Marse George" and himself were merely boys, and under her authority, would give him a stern reproof, which Billy always received in an abstracted silence, as if he had not heard a word that was said to him. Finding that he acted throughout as if he had not heard, Madam Washington turned him over to Aunt Sukey, who, after the fashion of those days, with white boys as well as black, gave him a smart birching. Billy's

* In Washington's will he mentions "my man William, calling himself William Lee," and gives him his freedom, along with the other slaves, and an annuity besides: "and this I give him as a testimony of my sense of his attachment to me, and for his faithful services during the Revolutionary War."

roars were like the trumpeting of an elephant; but within a week he went back to his old way of forgetting there was anybody in the world except "Marse George." Then Madam Washington turned him over to Uncle Jasper, who "lay" that he would "meck dat little triflin' nigger min' missis." A second and much more vigorous birching followed at the hands of Uncle Jasper, who triumphed over Aunt Sukey when Billy for two days actually seemed to realize that he had something else to do besides following George about and never taking his eyes off of him. Uncle Jasper's victory was short-lived, though. Within a week Billy was as good-for-nothing as ever, except to George. Madam Washington then saw that it was not a case of discipline—that the boy was simply dominated by his devotion to George, and could neither be forced nor reasoned out of it. Therefore it was arranged that the care of the young master's horse and everything pertaining to him should be confided to Billy, who would work all day with the utmost willingness for "Marse George." By this means Billy was made of use. Nobody touched George's clothes or books or belongings except Billy. He scrubbed and then dry-rubbed the floor of his young master's room, scoured the windows, cut the wood and made

the fires, attended to his horse, and when George was there personally to direct him, Billy would do whatever work he was ordered. But the instant he was left to himself he returned to idleness, or to some perfectly useless work for his young master—polishing up windows that were already bright, dry-rubbing a floor that shone like a mirror, or brushing George's clothes which were quite spotless. His young master loved him with the strong affection that commonly existed between the masters and the body-servants in those days. Like Madam Washington, George was a natural disciplinarian, and, himself capable of great labor of mind and body, he exacted work from everybody. But Billy was an exception to this rule. It is not in the human heart to be altogether without weaknesses, and Billy was George's weakness. When his mother would declare the boy to be the idlest servant about the place, George could not deny it; but he always left the room when there were any animadversions on his favorite, and could never be brought to acknowledge that Billy was not a much-injured boy. Serene in the consciousness that "Marse George" would stand by him, Billy troubled himself not at all about Madam Washington's occasional cutting remarks as to his uselessness, nor his father's and mother's more out-

spoken complaints that he "warn't no good 'scusin' 'twas to walk arter Marse George, proud as a peacock ef he kin git a ole jacket or a p'yar o' Marse George's breeches fur ter go strut-tin' roun' in." Aunt Sukey was very pious, and Uncle Jasper was a preacher, and held forth Sunday nights, in a disused corn-house on the place, to a large congregation of negroes from the neighboring places. But Billy showed no fondness whatever for these meetings, preferring to go to the Established Church with his young master every Sunday, sitting in a corner of the gallery, and going to sleep with much comfort and regularity as soon as he got there. Madam Washington always exacted of every one who went to church from her house that he or she should repeat the clergyman's text on coming home, and Billy was no exception to the rule. On Sunday, therefore, instead of joining the gay procession of youths and young men, all hand-somely mounted, who rode along the highway after church, George devoted his time on his way home to teaching Billy the text. The boy always repeated it very glibly when Madam Washington demanded it of him, and thereby won her favor, for a short time, once a week.

On this particular morning, as George took the reins from Billy and jumped on the back of

his sorrel colt, and galloped down the lane towards the fodder-field, Billy, who was keen enough where his young master was concerned, saw that he was preoccupied. Contrary to custom, he would not take his dog Rattler with him, and Billy, dragging the whining dog by the neck, hauled him back into the house and up into George's room, where the two proceeded to lay themselves down before the fire and go to sleep. An hour later the indignant Aunt Sukey found them, and but for George's return just then it would have gone hard with Billy, anyhow.

As George galloped briskly along in the crisp October morning, he felt within him the full exhilaration of youth and health and hope. He had not been able to sleep all night for thinking of that promised visit to Greenway Court. He had heard of it—a strange combination of hunting-lodge and country-seat in the mountains, where Lord Fairfax lived, surrounded by dependants, like a feudal baron. George had never in his life been a hundred miles away from home. He had been over to Mount Vernon since his brother Laurence's marriage, and the visit had charmed him so that his ever prudent mother had feared that the simpler and plainer life at Ferry Farm would be distasteful to him; for Mount Vernon was a fine, roomy country-house,

where Laurence Washington and his handsome young wife, both rich, dispensed a splendid hospitality. There was a great stable full of saddle-horses and coach-horses, a retinue of servants, and a continual round of entertaining going on. Laurence Washington had only lately retired from the British army, and his house was the favorite resort for the officers of the British warships that often came up the Potomac, as well as the officers of the military post at Alexandria. Although he enjoyed this gay and interesting life at Mount Vernon, George had left it without having his head turned, and came back quite willingly to the sober and industrious regularity of the home at Ferry Farm. He was the favorite over all his brothers with Laurence Washington and his wife, and it was a well-understood fact that, if they died without children, George was to inherit the splendid estate of Mount Vernon. Madam Washington had been a kind stepmother to Laurence Washington, and he repaid it by his affection for his half-brothers and young sister. In those days, when the eldest son was the heir, it seemed quite natural that George, as next eldest, should have preference, and should be the next person of consequence in the family to his brother Laurence.

He spent an hour riding over the place, seeing

that the fodder had been properly stripped from the stalks in a field, looking after the ferry-boats, giving an eye to the feeding of the stock, and a sharp investigation of the stables, and returned to the house by seven o'clock. Precisely at seven o'clock every morning all the children, servants, and whatever guests there were in the house assembled in the sitting-room, where prayers were read. In his father's time the master of the house had read these prayers, and after his death Laurence, as the head of the family, had taken up this duty; but since his marriage and removal to Mount Vernon it had fallen upon George.

When he entered the room he found his mother waiting for him, as usual, with little Mistress Betty and the three younger boys. The servants, including Billy, who had already been reported by Aunt Sukey, were standing around the wall. After an affectionate good-morning to his mother, George, with dignity and reverence, read the family prayers in the Book of Common Prayer. His mother was as calm and as collected as usual, but in the small velvet bag she carried over her arm lay an important letter, received between the time that George left the house in the morning and his return. Prayers over, breakfast was served, George sitting in his father's place at the head of the table, and Mad-

am Washington talking calmly over every-day matters.

"I do not know what we are to do with that boy Billy," she said. "This morning, when he ought to have been picking up chips for the kitchen, he was lying in front of your fireplace with Rattler, both of them sound asleep."

George, instead of being scandalized at this, only smiled a little.

"I do not know which is the most useless," exclaimed Madam Washington, with energy, "the dog or that boy!"

George ceased smiling at this; he did not like to have Billy too severely commented on, and deftly turned the conversation. "Lord Fairfax again asked me, when we were crossing the river last night, to visit him at Greenway Court. I should like very much to go, mother. I believe I would rather go even than to spend Christmas at Mount Vernon, for I have been to Mount Vernon, but I have never been to Greenway, or to any place like it."

"The earl sent me a letter this morning on the subject before he left Fredericksburg," replied Madam Washington, quietly.

The blood flew into George's face, but he spoke no word. His mother was a person who did not like to be questioned.

"You may read it," she continued, handing it to him out of her bag.

It was sealed with the huge crest of the Fairfaxes, and was written in the beautiful penmanship of the period. It began:

"HONORED MADAM,—The promise you graciously made me, that your eldest son, Mr. George Washington, might visit me at Greenway Court, gave me both pride and pleasure; and will you not add to that pride and pleasure by permitting him to return with me when I pass through Fredericksburg again on my way home two days hence? Do not, honored madam, think that I am proposing that your son spend his whole time with me in sport and pleasure. While both have their place in the education of the young, I conceive, honored madam, that your son has more serious business in hand—namely, the improvement of his mind, and the acquiring of those noble qualities and graces which distinguish the gentleman from the lout.

"He would have at Greenway, at least, the advantage of the best minds in England as far as they can be writ in books, and for myself, honored madam, I will be as kind to him as the tenderest father. If you can recall with any pleasure the days so long ago, when we were both twenty years younger, and when your friendship, honored madam, was the chief pleasure, as it always will be the chief honor, of my life, I beg that you will not refuse my request. I am, madam, with sentiments of the highest esteem,

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"FAIRFAX."

"Have you thought it over, mother?"

"Yes, my son; but, as you know I am a

person of deliberation, I will think it over yet more."

"I will give up Christmas at Mount Vernon, mother, if you will let me go."

"I have already promised your brother that you shall spend Christmas with him, and I cannot recall my word."

George said no more. He got up, and, bowing respectfully to his mother, went out. He had that morning more than his usual number of tasks to do; but all day long he was in a dream. For all his steadiness and willingness to lead a quiet life with his mother and the younger children at Ferry Farm, he was by nature adventurous, and for more than a year he had chafed inwardly at the narrow and uneventful existence which he led. He had early announced that he wished to serve either in the army or the navy, but, like all people, young or old, who have strong determination, he bided his time quietly, doing meanwhile what came to hand. He had been every whit as much fascinated with Lord Fairfax as the elder man had been with him; and the prospect of a visit to Greenway—of listening to his talk of the great men he had known, of seeing the mountains for the first time in his life, and of hunting and sporting in their wilds, of taking lessons in fencing from old Lance, of look-

ing over Lord Fairfax's books—was altogether enchanting. He had a keen taste for social life, and his Christmas at Mount Vernon, with all its gayety and company, had been the happiest two weeks of his life. Suppose his mother should agree to let him go to Greenway with the earl and then come back by way of Mount Vernon? Such a prospect seemed almost too dazzling. He brought his horse down to a walk along the cart-road through the woods he was traversing while he contemplated the delightful vision; and then, suddenly coming out of his day-dream, he pulled himself together, and, striking into a sharp gallop, tried to dismiss the subject from his mind. This he could not do, but he could exert himself so that no one would guess what was going on in his mind, and in this he was successful.

Two o'clock was the dinner-hour at Ferry Farm, and a few minutes before that time George walked up from the stables to the house. Little Betty was on the watch, and ran down to the gate to meet him. Their mother, looking out of the window, saw them coming across the lawn arm in arm, Betty chattering like a magpie and George smiling as he listened. They were two of the handsomest and healthiest and brightest-eyed young creatures that could be imagined, and Madam Washington's heart glowed with a

pride which she believed sinful and strove unavailingly to smother.

At dinner Madam Washington and George and Betty talked, the three younger boys being made to observe silence, after the fashion of the day. Neither Madam Washington nor George brought up the subject of the earl's visit, although it was a tremendous event in their quiet lives. But little Betty, who was the talkative member of the family, at once began on him. His coach and horses and outriders were grand, she admitted; but why an earl, with bags of money, should choose to wear a plain brown suit, no better than any other gentleman, Mistress Betty vowed she could not understand. His kneebuckles were not half so fine as George's, and brother Laurence had a dozen suits finer than the earl's.

"His sword-hilt is worth more than this plantation," remarked George, by way of mitigating Betty's scorn for the earl's costume. Betty acknowledged that she had never seen so fine a sword-hilt in her life, and then innocently remarked that she wished she were going to visit at Greenway Court with George. George's face turned crimson, but he remained silent. He was a proud boy, and had never in his life begged for anything, but he wanted to go so badly that

the temptation was strong in him to mount his horse without asking anybody's leave, and, taking Billy and Rattler with him, start off alone for the mountains.

Dinner was over presently, and as they rose Madam Washington said, quietly:

"My son, I have determined to allow you to join Lord Fairfax, and I have sent an inquiry to him, an hour ago, asking at what time to-morrow you should meet him in Fredericksburg. You may remain with him until December; but the first mild spell in December I wish you to go down to Mount Vernon for Christmas, as I promised."

George's delight was so great that he grew pale with pleasure. He would have liked to catch his mother in his arms and kiss her, but mother and son were chary of showing emotion. Therefore he only took her hand and kissed it, saying, breathlessly:

"Thank you, mother. I hardly hoped for so much pleasure."

"But it is not for pleasure that I let you go," replied his mother, who, according to the spirit of the age, referred everything to duty. "'Tis because I think my Lord Fairfax's company will be of benefit to you; and as there is but little prospect of a school here this winter, and I have

made no arrangements for a tutor, I must do something for your education, but that I cannot do until after Christmas. So, as I think you will be learning something of men as well as of books, I have thought it best, after reflecting upon it as well as I can, to let you go."

"I will promise you, mother, never to do or say anything while I am away from you that I would be ashamed for you to know," cried George.

Madam Washington smiled at this.

"Your promise is too extensive," she said. "Promise me only that you will *try* not to do or say anything that will make me ashamed, and that will be enough."

George colored, as he answered:

"I dare say I promised too much, and so I will accept the change you make."

Here a wild howl burst upon the air. Billy, who had been standing behind George's chair, understood well enough what the conversation meant, and that he was to be separated until after Christmas from his beloved "Marse George." Madam Washington, who had little patience with such outbreaks of emotion, sharply spoke to him. "Be quiet, Billy!"

Billy's reply was a fresh burst of tears and wailing, which brought home to little Betty that

George was about to leave them, and caused her to dissolve into tears and sobs, while Rattler, running about the room, and looking from one to the other, began to bark furiously.

Madam Washington, standing up, calm, but excessively annoyed at this commotion in her quiet house, brought her foot down with a light tap, which, however, meant volumes. Uncle Jasper too appeared, and was about to haul Billy off to condign punishment when George intervened.

"Hold your tongue, Billy," he said; and Billy, digging his knuckles into his eyes, subsided as quietly as he had broken forth.

"Now go up to my room and take the dog, and stay there until I come," continued George.

Billy obeyed promptly. Betty, however, having once let loose the floodgates, hung around George's neck and wept oceans of tears. George soothed her as best he could, but Betty would not be comforted, and was more distressed than ever when, in a little while, a note arrived from Lord Fairfax, saying he would leave Fredericksburg the next morning at sunrise if it would be convenient to Mr. Washington to join him then.

## CHAPTER IV

Before daybreak the next morning George came down-stairs, Billy following with his portmanteau. Madam Washington, little Betty, and all the house-servants were up and dressed, but it was thought best not to waken the three little boys, who slept on comfortably in their trundle-beds. The candles were lighted, and for the last time for two months, which seems long to the young, George had family prayers. His mother then took the book from him and read the prayers for travellers about to start on a journey. She was quite composed, for no woman ever surpassed Madam Washington in self-control; but little Betty still wept, and would not leave George's side even while he ate his breakfast. There had been some talk of Betty's going to Mount Vernon also for Christmas, and George, remembering this, asked his mother, as a last favor, that she would let Betty meet him there, whence he could bring her home. Madam Washington agreed, and this quickly dried Betty's

tears. Billy acted in a mysterious manner. Instead of being in vociferous distress, he was quiet and even cheerful, so much so that a grin discovered itself on his countenance, which was promptly banished as soon as he saw Madam Washington's clear, stern eyes travelling his way. George, feeling for poor Billy's loneliness, had determined to leave Rattler behind for company; but both Billy and Rattler were to cross the ferry with him, the one to bring the horse back, and the other for a last glimpse of his master.

The parting was not so mournful, therefore, as it promised to be. George went into the chamber where his three little brothers slept, who were not wide awake enough to feel much regret at his departure. The servants all came out and he shook the hand of each, especially Uncle Jasper's, while Aunt Sukey embraced him. His mother kissed him and solemnly blessed him, and the procession started. George mounted his own horse, while Betty, seated pillion-wise behind him, was to ride with him to the ferry. Uncle Jasper and Aunt Sukey walked as far as the gate, and Billy, with Rattler at his heels and the portmanteau on his head, started off on a brisk run down the road. The day was breaking beautifully. A pale blue mist lay over the river and the woods. The fields, bare and brown, were

covered with a white hoar-frost, and harbored flocks of partridges, which rose on whirring wings as the gray light turned to red and gold. In the chinquapin bushes along the road squirrels chattered, and a hare running across the lane reminded George of his hare-traps, which he charged Betty to look to. But although Betty would have died for him at any moment, she would not agree to have any hand in the trapping and killing of any living thing; so she would only promise to tell the younger boys to look after the traps.

"And it won't be long until Christmas," said George, turning in his saddle and pressing Betty's arm that was around him as they galloped along briskly; "and if I have a chance of sending a letter, I will write you one. Think, Betty, you will have a letter all to yourself; you have never had one, I know."

"I never had a letter all to myself," answered Betty. For that was before the days of cheap postage, or postage at all as it is now; and letters were rare and precious treasures.

"And it will be very fine at Mount Vernon — ladies, and even girls like you, wearing hoops, and dancing minuets every evening, while Black Tubal and Squirrel Tom play their fiddles."

"I like minuets well enough, but I like jigs and rigadoons better; and mother will not let me wear a hoop. But I am to have her white sarcenet silk made over for me. That I know."

"You must practise on the harpsichord very much, Betty; for at Mount Vernon there is one, and brother Laurence and his wife will want you to play before company."

Mistress Betty was not averse to showing off her great accomplishment, and received this very complaisantly. Altogether, what with the letter and the white sarcenet, she began to take a hopeful rather than a despairing view of the coming two months.

Arrived within sight of the ferry, George stopped, and lifted Betty off the horse. There was a foot-path across the fields to the house which made it but a short walk back, which Betty could take alone. The brother and sister gave each other one long and silent embrace—for they loved each other very dearly—and then, without a word, Betty climbed over the fence and walked rapidly homeward, while George made for the ferry, where Billy and the portmanteau awaited him. One of the small boats and two ferry-men, Yellow Dick and Sambo, took him across the river. The horse was to be car-

GEORGE BIDS BETTY GOOD-BYE

ried across for George to ride to the inn where Lord Fairfax awaited him, and Billy was to take the horse back again.

The flush of the dawn was on the river when the boat pushed off, and George thought he had never seen it lovelier; but like most healthy young creatures on pleasure bent, he had no sentimental regrets. The thing he minded most was leaving Billy, because he was afraid the boy would be in constant trouble until his return. But Billy seemed to take it so debonairly that George concluded the boy had at last got over his strong disinclination to work for or think of anybody except "Marse George."

The boat shot rapidly through the water, rowed by the stalwart ferry-men, and George was soon on the opposite shore. He bade good-bye to Yellow Dick and Sambo, and, mounting his horse, with Billy still trotting ahead with the portmanteau, rode off through the quaint old town to the tavern. It was a long, low building at the corner of two straggling streets, and signs of the impending departure of a distinguished guest were not wanting. Captain Benson, a militia officer, kept the tavern, and in honor of the Earl of Fairfax had donned a rusty uniform, and was going back and forth between the stable and the kitchen, first looking after his lordship's break-

fast and then after his lordship's horses' breakfasts. He came bustling out when George rode up.

"Good-morning, Mr. Washington. 'Light, sir, 'light. I understand you are going to Greenway Court with his lordship. He is now at his breakfast. Will you please to walk in?"

"No, I thank you, sir," responded George. "If you will kindly mention to Lord Fairfax that I am here, you will oblige me."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," cried Captain Benson, disappearing in the house.

The travelling-chariot was out and the horses were being put to it under the coachman's superintendence, while old Lance was looking after the luggage. He came up to George, and, giving him the military salute, asked for Mr. Washington's portmanteau. George could scarcely realize that he was going until he saw it safely stowed along with the earl's under the box-seat. He then determined to send Billy off before the earl made his appearance, for fear of a terrible commotion, after all, when Billy had to face the final parting.

"Now, Billy," said George to him, very earnestly, "you will not give my mother so much trouble as you used to, but do as you are told, and it will be better for you."

"Yes, suh," answered Billy, looking in George's eyes without winking.

"And here is a crown for you," said George, slipping one into Billy's hand—poor George had only a few crowns in a purse little Betty had knitted for him. "Now mount the horse and go home. Good-bye, Rattler, boy—all of Lord Fairfax's dogs, of every kind, shall not make me forget you."

Billy, without the smallest evidence of grief, but with rather a twinkle in his beady eyes, shook his young master's hand, jumped on the horse, and, whistling to Rattler, all three of George's friends disappeared down the village street. George looked after them for some minutes and sighed at what was before Billy, but comforted himself by recalling the boy's sensible behavior in the matter of the parting. In a few moments Lord Fairfax came out. George went up the steps to the porch, and, making his best bow, tried to say how much he felt the earl's kindness. True gratitude is not always glib, and was not with George, but the earl saw from the boy's face the intense pleasure he experienced.

"You will sit with me, Mr. Washington," said Lord Fairfax, "and when you are tired of the chariot I will have one of my outriders give

you a horse, and have him ride the wheel-horse."

"Anything that your lordship pleases," was George's polite reply.

The earl bade a dignified farewell to Captain Benson, who escorted him to the coach, and in a little while, with George by his side and the outriders ahead, they were jolting along towards the open country.

The earl talked a little for the first hour or two, pointing out objects in the landscape, and telling interesting facts concerning them, which George had never known before. After a while, though, he took down two books from a kind of shelf in the front of the coach, and handing one to George, said:

"Here is a volume of the *Spectator*. You will find both profit and pleasure in it. Thirty years ago the *Spectator* was the talk of the day. It ruled London clubs and drawing-rooms, and its influence was not unfelt in politics." The other book, George saw, was an edition of Horace in the original. As soon as the earl opened it he became absorbed in it.

Not so with George and the *Spectator*. Although fond of reading, and shrewd enough to see that the earl would have but a low opinion of a boy who could not find resources in books,

what was passing before him was too novel and interesting, to a boy who had been so little away from home, to divide his attention with anything. The highway was fairly good, but the four roans took the road at such a rattling gait that the heavy chariot rolled and bumped and lurched like a ship at sea. So well made was it, though, and so perfect the harness, that not a bolt, a nut, or a strap gave way. The country for the first thirty miles was not unlike what George was accustomed to, but his keen eyes saw some difference as they proceeded towards the northwest. The day was bright and beautiful, a sharper air succeeding the soft Indian summer of the few days preceding. The cavalcade made a vast dust, clatter, and commotion. Every homestead they passed was aroused, and people, white and black, came running out to see the procession. George enjoyed the coach very much at first, but he soon began to wish that he were on the back of one of the stout nags that rode ahead, and determined, as soon as they stopped for dinner, to take advantage of Lord Fairfax's offer and to ask to ride.

They had started soon after sunrise, and twelve o'clock found them more than twenty-five miles from Fredericksburg. They stopped at a roadside tavern for dinner and some hours' rest. The

tavern was large and comfortable, and boasted the luxury of a private room, where dinner was served to the earl and his young guest. The tavern-keeper himself carved for them, and although he treated the earl with great respect, saying "My lord" at every other word, according to the custom of the day, there was no servility in his manner. Like everybody else, he was struck with George's manner and appearance on first seeing him, and, finding out that he was the son of the late Colonel Augustine Washington, made the boy's face glow with praise of his father. When the time came to start George made his request that he be allowed to ride a horse, and he was immediately given his choice of the four bays. He examined them all quickly, but with the eye of a natural judge of a horse, and unerringly picked out the best of the lot. "Do not feel obliged to regulate your pace by ours," said the earl. "We are to sleep to-night at Farley's tavern, only twenty miles from here, and so you present yourself by sundown it is enough."

George mounted and rode off. He found the bay well rested by his two hours' halt and ready for his work. He felt so much freer and happier on horseback than in the chariot that he could not help wishing he could make the rest

of the journey in that way. But he thought it would scarcely be polite to abandon the earl altogether, and determined to make the first stage in the coach every day. He rode on all the afternoon, keeping the high-road with ease, although towards the end it began to grow wilder and rougher. He reached Farley's tavern some time before sundown, and his arrival giving advance notice of the earl, everything was ready for him, even to a fine wild turkey roasting on the kitchen spit for supper. Like most of the road-houses of the day, Farley's was spacious and comfortable, though not luxurious. There was a private room there, too, with a roaring fire of hickory logs on the hearth, for the night had grown colder. At supper, when there was time to spare, old Lance produced a box, out of which he took some handsome table furniture and a pair of tall silver candlesticks. The supper was brought in smoking hot, Lance bearing aloft the wild turkey on a vast platter. He also brought forth a bottle of wine of superior vintage to anything that the tavern cellar could produce.

The earl narrowly watched George as they supped together, talking meanwhile. He rightly judged that table manners and deportment are a very fair test of one's training in the niceties of life, and was more than ever pleased the

closer he observed the boy. First, George proved himself a skilful carver, and carved the turkey with the utmost dexterity. This was an accomplishment carefully taught him by his mother. Then, although he had the ravenous appetite of a fifteen-year-old boy after a long day's travel, he did not forget to be polite and attentive to the earl, who trifled with his supper rather than ate it. The boy took one glass of wine, and declined having his glass refilled. His conversation was chiefly replies to questions, and were so apt that the earl every moment liked his young guest better and better. George was quite unconscious of the deep attention with which Lord Fairfax observed him. He thought he had been asked to Greenway out of pure good-nature, and rather wished to keep in the background so he should not make his host repent his hospitality. But a feeling, far deeper than mere good-nature, inspired the earl. He felt a profound interest in the boy, and was enough a judge of human nature to see that something remarkable might be expected of him.

Soon after supper occurred the first inelegance on George's part. In the midst of a sentence of the earl's the boy suddenly and involuntarily gave a wide yawn. He colored furiously, but

Lord Fairfax burst into one of his rare laughs, and calling Lance, directed him to show Mr. Washington to his room. George was perfectly willing to go ; but when Lance, taking one of the tall candlesticks, showed him his room, his eyes suddenly came wide open, and the idea that Lance could tell him all about the siege of Bouchain, and marching and starving and fighting with Marlborough, drove the sleep from his eyes like the beating of a drum.

Reaching the room Lance put the candle on the dressing-table, and, standing at "attention," asked :

"Anything else, sir?"

"Yes," said George, seating himself on the edge of the bed. "How long will it be before my Lord Fairfax needs you?"

"About two hours, sir. His lordship sits late."

"Then—then—" continued George, with a little diffidence, "I wish you would tell me something about campaigning with the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, and all about the siege of Bouchain."

Lance's strong, weather-beaten face was suddenly illuminated with a light that George had not seen on it before, and his soldierly figure unconsciously took a more military pose.

"'Tis a long story, sir," he said, "and I was

only a youngster and a private soldier; it is thirty-five years gone now."

"That's why I want you to tell it," replied George. "All the books are written by the officers, but never a word have I heard from a man in the ranks. I have read the life of the great Duke of Marlborough, and also Prince Eugene, but it is a different thing to hear a man tell of the wars who has burned powder in them."

"True, sir. And the Duke of Marlborough was the greatest soldier of our time. We have the Duke of Cumberland now—a brave general, sir, and brother to the king—but I warrant, had he been at the siege of Bouchain and in the Low Countries, he would have been licked worse than Marshal Villars."

"And Marshal Villars was a very skilful general too," said George, now thoroughly wide-awake.

"Certainly, sir, he was. The French are but a mean-looking set of fellows, but how they can fight! And they have the best legs of any soldiers in Europe; and I am not so sure they have not the best heads. I fought 'em for twenty-five years—for I only quitted the service when I came with my Lord Fairfax to this new country—and I ought to know. My time of enlistment was up, the great duke was dead, and

there had been peace for so long that I thought soldiers in Europe had forgot to fight; so when his lordship offered to bring me, I, who had neither wife nor child, nor father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, was glad to come with him. I had served in his lordship's regiment, and he knew me because I had once—but never mind that, sir."

"No," cried George. "Go on."

"Well, sir," said Lance, looking sheepish, "I shouldn't have spoke of it; but the fact is, that once when we were transporting powder from the magazine the wagon broke down and a case exploded. It was a miracle that all of us were not killed; three poor fellows were marked for life, and retired on two shillings a day for it. There were plenty of sparks lying around, and I put some of them out, and we saved the rest of the powder. That's all, sir."

"I understand," answered George, smiling. "It was a gallant thing, and no doubt you saved some lives as well as some powder."

"Maybe so, sir," said Lance, a dull red showing under the tan and sunburn of more than fifty years. "My Lord Fairfax made more of it than 'twas worth. So, when he had left the army, and I thought he had forgot me, he wrote and asked if I would come to America with him, and

I came. Often, in the winter-time, the earl does not see a white face for months except mine, and then he forgets that we are master and man, and only remembers that he is my old commander and I am an old soldier. The earl was a young cornet in 1710–12, and was with the armies in the Low Countries, where we had given Marshal Villars a trouncing, and he gave Prince Eugene a trouncing back, in exchange. So, sometimes, of the long winter nights, the earl sends for me and reads to me out of books about that last campaign of the Duke of Marlborough's, and says to me, 'Lance, how was this?' And, 'Lance, do you recollect that?' Being only a soldier, I never did know what we were marching and countermarching for, nor so much as what we were fighting for; but when the earl asks me what we were doing when we marched from Lens to Aire, or from Arleux to Bachuel, I can tell him all about the march—whether 'twas in fine or rainy weather, and how we got across the rivers, and what rations we had; we often did not have any, and the mounseers were not much better off. But, Mr. Washington, a Frenchman's stomach is not like an Englishman's. They can sup on soup maigre and lentils after a hard day's march, and then get up and shake a leg while another fellow fiddles.

But an Englishman has to have his beef, sir, and bacon and greens, and a good thick porridge with beans in it. I think all the nourishment the Frenchmen get goes into their legs, for they will march day and night for their Grand Monarque, as they call him, and are always ready to fight."

"I hope we shall not have to fight the French up in Pennsylvania to make them keep their boundaries," said George, after a while, in a tone which plainly meant that he hoped very much they would have to fight, and that he would be in the thick of the scrimmage. "And now tell me how the Duke of Marlborough looked in action, and all about Prince Eugene, and the siege of Bouchain, until it is time to go to the earl. But first sit down, for you have had a hard day's travel."

"Thank you, sir," said Lance, sitting down stiffly, and snuffing the candle with his fingers.

## CHAPTER V

"You are asking me more, sir," said Lance, with something like a grim smile on his countenance, "than I could tell you in a month, or two months. But I can tell you how the Duke of Marlborough looked in battle, for I belonged to the foot-soldiers, and we were generally standing still for a time, until the cavalry had showed us where we were wanted, and we could see the generals riding over the field. The duke, you must know, sir, was not so very young when I served under him, but he was still the handsomest man in the British army. They say when he was a lieutenant that all the great ladies fell in love with him, and the one he married, I have read in a book, he was much in love with, but a deal more afraid of her than ever he was of the Grand Monarque and all his armies. They say it was a joke in England that the great duke obeyed his duchess and trembled at her word. But I dare say he is not the only man who ever ruled men and then let his wife rule him. The duke was a

noble sight at parade, with his splendid chestnut charger, his uniform of red and gold, his chapeau with plumes, and his great periwig. But, to my mind, he was a finer sight when the French artillerymen were ploughing up the ground — the French are monstrous good gunners, Mr. Washington, and hang on to their batteries like the devil—and the musketry screaming around, and that old fox, Marshal Villars, was hammering us in a dozen places at once. Then the duke was as calm as a May morning, and was full of jokes with his officers, and whistling to himself a queer kind of a tune with no tune to it. But old Villars never caught him napping, and was caught napping himself once. That was the time we took Bouchain."

George was very much on his guard not to let Lance know that he had never heard of Bouchain—or if he had read of it in the life of Marlborough, he had forgotten all about it—so he only said:

"Oh yes—about Bouchain."

"Well, sir, in the spring of 1711 the great duke arrived in the Low Countries—and glad enough were all to see him—for not only, we knew, we could lick the French and Bavarians if we were under him—but the army was always paid when the great duke commanded, and fed

and clothed, too. I remember when he came back that time he brought us forty thousand woollen shirts. The kings and queens thought that we, the common soldiers, did not know what was going on, but we knew the stay-at-homes were trying to ruin the duke at court, and that he had hardly been treated civilly when he got to England, and that three colonels—Meredith, Macartney, and Heywood—had been cashiered for drinking 'confusion to the enemies of the Duke of Marlborough.' It was while he was away that the allied army—as ours and our allies was called—had got a handsome drubbing at Almanza, in Spain, and I can't say that any of us cried over it; only we thought we might get drubbed ourselves if the duke didn't come back. So you may be sure, Mr. Washington, that when the news came that the whole army was to rendezvous at Orchies, and the duke had landed in Holland on his way to us, we felt better. The queen and the ministry and the parliament might look coldly on him, but on that bleak April day, when he rode into our cantonments at Orchies, every British soldier raised his voice in a huzza for the great duke.

"Marshal Villars had been all the winter throwing up redoubts and all sorts of works along his lines, from Bouchain, on the Scheldt, which lay

here"—Lance stooped down at this and drew an imaginary line on the floor, and George got off the bed, and, taking the candle, sat down on the floor the better to understand—"along the Sanset, which runs this way. Lord, Mr. Washington, I'll have to use the boot-jack to show you about Bouchain and Arras."

"And here are the snuffers," eagerly added George, "for Arras; and here is my pocket-rule, and a piece of chalk."

Lance seized the chalk.

"The very thing, sir!" And he drew a very fair map upon the floor, George watching him with bright, intelligent eyes, and afterwards taking the chalk, straightened up Lance's rude sketch.

"That's right, sir," said Lance, getting down on the floor himself. "It's a pleasure to show a young gentleman like you, sir, how it was done, because you have the understanding of it, if I may make bold to say so.

"Old Villars, then, being a monstrous sharp general, said to himself, 'Aha! I'll beat the long roll on Marlborough now,' and he had the astonishing impudence to call his lines 'Marlborough's *ne plus ultra*,' whatever that is, sir; I don't exactly know myself, but it is some sort of impudence in French."

George laughed a little to himself at Lance's notion of the old Latin phrase, but he was too much interested in the story to interrupt.

"Marshal Villars had near sixty thousand men, and such a gang of ragamuffins, Mr. Washington, you never saw. But they'd rather fight than eat; and let an old soldier tell you, sir, whenever you meet the French, don't count on licking 'em because they are half starved and half naked; I believe they fight better the worse off they are for victuals and clothes. The duke spent two or three weeks studying their works, and when he got through with it he knew more about them than Marshal Villars himself did. The summer had come, and the streams were no longer swollen, and the duke begun to lay his plans to trap old Villars. The first thing he did was to have a lot of earthworks thrown up at the place where he did not intend to break through the French lines. The French, of course, got wind of this, and drew all their forces away from Vitry, where the duke really meant to break through and cross the Sanset. All the Frenchmen were fooled, and Marshal Villars the worst of all. So when, one bright morning in July, the French scouts reported that Marlborough himself, with fifty squadrons of horse, was on the march for the earthworks he had made

SKETCHING THE DEFENCES ON THE SCHELDT

where he did not mean to cross, old Villars was cocksure he had him. The duke with his fifty squadrons marched a good day's march away from Vitry, the French scampering off in his direction and concentrating their troops just where the duke wanted them. Meanwhile, every mother's son of us was in marching order —the artillery ready, the pontoons ready, everybody and everything ready. About midday, seeing the French had been fooled, the order was given to march, and off we put for Vitry. As soon as we reached the river we laid the pontoons, and were drawn up on the bank just waiting for the word to cross. It was then late in the evening, but we had got news that the duke had turned around, and was making for us as fast as the horses of his squadrons could lay their hoofs to the ground. About nine o'clock we saw the dust of the advance guard down the highway; we heard the galloping of the horses long before. The instant the duke appeared the crossing begun, and by sunrise thirty thousand men had crossed and had joined General Hompesch's division of ten thousand between Oise and Estrum — and now we were within Villars's lines without striking a blow. 'Twas one of the greatest marches that ever was, Mr. Washington—ten leagues between

nine in the evening and ten the next morning —thirty thousand infantry, artillery, cavalry, miners, and sappers.

"Villars found out what was in the wind about midnight, and at two o'clock in the morning he turned around, and the whole French army came in pursuit of us; and if you will believe it, sir, they marched better than we did, and by eleven o'clock in the morning the beggars were as near Bouchain as we, for Bouchain was what we were after. 'Twas a strong fortress, and the key to that part of France; and if we could get it we could walk to the heart of France any day we liked.

"Old Villars wanted to bring us to fight, but the duke was too wary for him. He sat down before Bouchain, that had a large garrison of picked men, commanded by the bravest officers in the French army, with stores, guns, and ammunition in plenty. The duke had to make a causeway over a morass before he could get at 'em at all, and there was Villars behind us, ready to cut us to pieces, and that stubborn fortress in front. It was the hardest siege I ever knew, though it was not the longest. The people at home were clamoring for the duke to fight Villars instead of taking Bouchain; but the duke knew that if he could get the fortress he would

have the control of three great rivers—the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Lys—and then we could cut off any army the Grand Monarque could send against us. 'Tis a deal harder, sir, to keep men's spirits up in a siege than in a battle. The army would rather have been fighting Villars any day; but there we were, laying trenches, mounting our guns, and every day closing in on that town. The duke was very anxious after a while to know what the condition of the town was within the bastions, and every young cornet and ensign in the army wanted to risk his skin by sneaking in and finding out. But while the duke was turning this over in his mind it happened that the enemy sent us a flag of truce in regard to an armistice. The duke did not want an armistice, but he wanted mightily to know how things were looking inside, so he agreed to send a flag of truce back. The French, though, are not to be easily outwitted, and they made it a condition that the officers sent with the flag be blindfolded. Three officers went in; but they had their sashes tied around their eyes, and the only thing they saw when they had been led blindfolded for a half-mile through the town and into the citadel was a very handsome room in which the commandant received them. They talked awhile, but did not come to any terms;

and then the commandant very politely invited them to take some refreshment, and a regular feast was set out for them—just to make them think that provisions were plenty — and the French officers who dined with them ate scarcely anything. But they looked gaunt and hollow-eyed enough, and I warrant they fell to as soon as the English officers left. So, after all, Lord Fairfax was the one to get in."

"Was anybody with him?" asked George.

"Well, sir—the fact is, sir—I was with him."

George jumped up off the floor, and, seizing Lance's hand, wrung it hard in his enthusiasm. Lance smiled one of his grim smiles.

"Young gentlemen are apt to think more of a little thing like that than it's worth," was the old soldier's commentary on this, as George again seated himself on the floor and with eloquent and shining eyes besought Lance to tell him of his entrance into the besieged fortress.

"It was about a week after that, when one night, as I was toasting a piece of cheese on a ramrod over the fire, up comes quite a nice-looking young woman and begins to jabber to me in French. She had on a red petticoat and a blue bodice, like the peasant women in those parts wear, and a shawl around her, and a cap on her head ; but she did not look like a peasant,

but rather like a town milliner. She had a basket of eggs in her hand, as the people sometimes brought us to sell, though, poor things, they had very few eggs or chickens, or anything else. Now I could speak the French lingo tolerably, for I had served so many years where it was spoke, so we begun bargaining for the eggs, and she kept up a devil of a chattering. At last we agreed on two pistoles for the lot, and I handed out the money, when suddenly she flew into a rage, threw the money in my face, and, what was worse, began to pelt me with sticks and stones and even the eggs. That brought some of my comrades around, and, to my surprise, she begun to talk in a queer sort of French-English, saying I had cheated her, and a lot more stuff, and, stamping on the ground, demanded to be taken to an officer. Just then two young officers happened to be passing, and they stopped to ask what the row was about. The young woman then poured forth her story, and I was in an ace of being put in the guard-house when she whispered something to one of them, and he started as if he had been shot. Then he whispered it to the other one, and presently all three—the young woman and the two officers—begun to laugh as if they would crack their sides. This was not very pleasant for me, stand-

ing there like a post, with rage in my heart; the more so, when one of the officers, laughing still, told me it was all right, and I could go back to my cheese and ramrod, and they went off in one direction in the darkness and the young woman in another. They were hardly out of sight when back comes the young woman again. As you may think, I never wanted to clap my eyes on her again; but she slapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Lance, my man, don't you know me?' and it was—it was—"

George was so eager at this point that he crawled on all fours up to Lance and gazed breathlessly into his face.

"It was Lord Fairfax dressed up as a woman! And he says, when I had come to myself a little, for I nearly dropped dead with surprise, 'If I can fool my own men and my own brother officers, I ought to be able to fool the Frenchmen into letting me into the town.' And sure enough, Mr. Washington, that was exactly what he did."

Lance paused to get the full dramatic effect of this. It was not wasted on his young listener, for George gave a gasp of astonishment that spoke volumes, and his first words, when speech returned to him, were:

"Go on—go on quick!"

"Well, sir, Lord Fairfax told me that he had a scheme to get in the town as a woman, and I was to go with him as his servant, because I could speak the lingo, and on the frontier there they have so many accents that they couldn't tell if you were a Dutchman or an Englishman or a Russian or a Prussian; and, besides, my lord said, my French had a High-Dutch twang that couldn't be excelled. He was a week thinking it over and practising in his tent. Of course, he didn't tell but one or two persons what he was after; he meant it to be as secret as possible. So when he would send for me to his tent at night every crack and cranny would be stopped, and there would be just one or two young officers putting the earl through his paces, as it were. He was a slim, handsome young man then, and when he got a woman's wig on, and a little rouge, and was dressed in the latest fashion with a great hoop—for he meant to represent a lady, not a peasant woman — anybody would have taken him for a pretty young lady. The hoop and the sack and all the fallals a lady would wear were of real service to him, as he could wear his uniform under them, and so, if he should be found out and arrested, he would be entitled to be treated as a prisoner of war. If he had been caught in the French lines without his

uniform he would have been strung up in short order as a spy, according to the articles of war. I kept my uniform on too, but that was a simple matter, as I was only disguised by another suit of man's clothing put on over it.

"My lord had something else under his hoop besides his uniform—a good rapier, with a Toledo blade; and his lace neck-handkerchief was fastened with a jewelled dagger that was more than a toy. He was to be Madame Geoffroy in search of her husband, who was supposed to be in the garrison, and I was to be a great, stupid, faithful Alsatian servant, and my name was to be Jacques; and my name is Peter, sir. I had no arms, only a great stick; but there was a knob in that stick, and when I pulled out that knob I had a sword.

"We used to practise of a night in the tent. My lord had merriment in him then, and officers always like a lark; and it would have made you laugh, Mr. Washington, to have seen my lord, all dressed up as a woman, pretending to cry, and holding his handkerchief to his face while he rehearsed the story he was making up to the two young officers. It was a yarn all about the supposed Madame Geoffroy's travels in search of her husband, and her delight when she heard he was one of the officers of the Bouchain garrison;

and, of course, she would be told by somebody that there was no such officer in the garrison, and then she was to give a screech and fall over, and I was to catch her and beg her to control herself. Oh, it was as good as play-acting! Often, when I have thought of that adventure, and have remembered how my lord looked then and how he looks now — so serious and grave, and as if he never played a prank in his life—I could hardly persuade myself it was the same man. Well, Mr. Washington, after we had got it all straight, one dark August night we ran the sentries—that is, we slipped past them in the dark. They thought we were deserters, although why anybody should desert from our camp, where we had both victuals and drink in plenty, to go to Bouchain, where they had neither, nobody could make out. However, we heard the shots cracking behind us as we managed to pick our way through the morass, and truly, sir, I think we were in more danger of our lives while crossing that morass in the dark between the English and French lines than at any other time. It was terrible work, but we managed to get to a solid piece of ground, covered with underbrush, where our outfit was concealed. Luckily we had to conceal our clothes, for we were covered with black mud, and we had a time scraping it off our

hands and faces. At last, though, after half an hour's hard work there in the swamp, we were dressed. We then had to steal about a mile off, through the undergrowth, to the right of the French lines. This would have been easy enough for us except for my lord's toggery, but the little rents and stains we got upon us gave the more color to the story we had to tell of a long day's travel and many mishaps on the way.

"After a while, sir, we got out on the open highway, and then we took breath and made for the French sentries. I tied a white handkerchief on to my long stick, and we marched along until we got to the first outpost; and when the sentry levelled his piece and asked us 'Who goes there?' my lord advanced and said, in a woman's voice, 'A distressed lady.' The night was dark, but the sentry could see it was a lady, and then my lord said, 'I am Madame Geoffroy, the wife of a French officer, and I desire you to bring the officer of the guard to me at once.' That sounded straight enough, so the soldier took a little whistle from his belt and whistled, and pretty quickly a smart young lieutenant stepped up.

"The supposed Madame Geoffroy had then sunk upon the ground, pretending to be almost fainting with fatigue, and after this, Mr. Washington, I will make bold to call my lord Madame Geof-

froy during the whole of this adventure; for nobody thought he was anything but a woman, and sometimes I had to rub my eyes and ask if I wasn't really named Jacques, and Madame Geoffroy and her big hoop and her lost husband weren't real.

"The Frenchmen are monstrous polite, as you know, sir, and when the lieutenant saw a lady sighing and moaning on the ground he took off his hat and bowed low, and asked what he could do for her.

"'Let me see the commandant of the garrison for only one moment!' cried Madame Geoffroy, clasping her hands. 'My husband — my poor, brave husband! Oh, sir, have some pity on a distracted woman, who has travelled nearly seven hundred leagues in search of her husband.'

"'Was your husband an officer in Marshal Villars's army, madame,' asked the lieutenant, bowing again.

"'He was—and is, I hope,' said madame. 'He was one of the King's Musketeers, but was taken prisoner at Oudenarde, and on being exchanged he joined Montbrasin's regiment because it was on the frontier; and since that day, a year ago, I have been unable to find any trace of him. I have strong hopes he is living, for I have no proof that he is dead; and knowing that Colonel

Montbrasin is the commandant of the garrison of Bouchain, I have made my way here, with incredible difficulty, even through the English lines.' Now this was really a very clever speech, for the King's Musketeers was a crack regiment, being the Grand Monarque's own body-guard, and no man was admitted into it unless he was of the best blood of France. So the lieutenant thought Madame Geoffroy was a great lady.

"'Madame,' said he, 'it is not in my power to promise you an interview with the commandant, but I will conduct you with pleasure to my superior officer, who commands the main entrance to the town."

"At that madame jumped up so sprightly and started to walk so fast that I was afraid the lieutenant would suspect her. But that is just like the French, Mr. Washington. One minute they are in the dolly dumps, so that you would think they could not live, and the next they are capering about, and laughing and singing as if they never had the dolly dumps in their lives. Off we set for the main gate. We walked along the intrenchments, and I kept my eyes open, and in spite of the half-darkness I saw a good many things that they would rather we hadn't seen. Their works were in a bad way, and our siege-guns had done their duty.

"Arrived at the gate-house the young lieutenant asked for the officer in command—Captain Saussier. So Captain Saussier came out, and madame went through all her story again. The captain ogled her, and it was all I could do to keep my countenance when I saw that the captain and the lieutenant were trying to cut one another out. They made no bones at all of taking her to see the commandant, particularly as she said she did not wish to stay, except until daylight the next morning, for in a besieged town they don't want any non-combatants to eat up the provender. But although they were willing enough for her to go in, they refused to let me. She made no objection to this, which surprised me; but in a moment she fell into one of those fits we had rehearsed for the commandant's benefit, when he should tell her, as we knew he would, that he had never seen or heard of her husband. I came forward then with smelling-salts, and presently she revived. That scared the officers a little, for the bravest officer in the world would rather be out of the way when a woman begins to cry and kick and scream. As soon as they led her towards the gate she had another fit, and as good a fit as I ever saw in my life, sir. Then I came running, of course, with the smelling-salts. The captain

evidently did not want her on his hands entirely as long as she was in that condition, so he said perhaps—ahem!—it might be better to take her servant along.

"'Oh, my good, faithful Jacques!' cried she. 'It would be a great comfort if I could have him with me in this trying time!' So they passed me in the gates along with her.

"She never stopped chattering for a moment while she was walking through the streets with the captain, telling a long rigmarole about her travels; but she used her eyes as well as I used mine. The town was horribly knocked to pieces —houses falling down, the streets encumbered with rubbish, and several breaches made in the walls. They had managed to repair the breaches after a fashion, for the French understand fortifications better than we do; but there was no doubt, from what we saw in that walk at nine o'clock at night, that the town and fortifications had suffered terribly. And there were no women or children to be seen, which showed that they had sent them all away, for some will remain in a besieged town as long as there is anything to feed them on.

"When we reached the citadel we noticed there were not near enough cannon to defend it; so we knew that they had been forced to take the

guns to place on the ramparts. At last, after going through many long passages and winding stairs, we were ushered into the commandant's presence. He was a tall, soldierly looking man, and he received madame very politely. The captain told the story of her tremendous efforts to get there and her trouble, madame all the time sighing and weeping. But here came in a frightful thing, sir. There had been a Captain Geoffroy, an officer in Marshal Villars's army, and I felt myself turning pale when the commandant offered to let madame remain in the town twenty-four hours until he could find out something about this Geoffroy. But madame's wit saved her.

"'Pray,' said she, clasping her hands, 'what was this M. Geoffroy like?"

"'Tall,' said the commandant, 'with a swarthy skin and black hair.'

"'Ah,' cried she, muffling her face in her handkerchief, 'it could not have been my husband. He was short, and had light hair, and had lost a part of his right ear in a duel; it disfigured him very much.'

"'Then, madame,' answered the commandant, 'I can give you no further information, for that is the only Geoffroy in the army of whom I know anything, and from your description he

cannot be your husband. I will make inquiries among my officers, but I can give you but little hope.'

"Madame sighed and groaned some more, and then said she would be ready to depart at daylight in the morning, to begin her search over again. The commandant offered her a room in the citadel, warning her that it would be necessary for her to get out before daybreak, as the English began their cannonade as soon as it was light enough to see the French lines. Madame agreed tearfully to this, and the commandant offered her some supper, smiling when he told her it was not exactly the kind of fare he was used to offering ladies. But she declined — we had not the heart to eat up anything from those poor devils. So she was shown to a room, and I lay down at the door and pretended to sleep; but you may depend upon it, sir, that neither one of us slept a wink. Towards daylight the captain of the guard came to waken us, and told us it was time to leave. The commandant was up to bid madame *adieu*, as they call it in the French lingo; and after thanking him for his politeness madame was escorted to the gate, I following her, and thence as far as the picket-line. And here, after the officer had left us, for the first time we aroused suspicion. We were walking

pretty fast, and something in the supposed lady's gait made the sentry suspect us. There was another soldier, not a sentry, with him, and this fellow called after us to stop. We were near the entrance to the bog then, and we knew the way across it, particularly as there was now daylight enough to see, so the only notice we took of him was to walk a little faster. The soldier followed us clear into the underbrush, when my lord — for so I will call him now — deliberately dropped his hoop and petticoat, revealing a pair of legs that evidently belonged to the British army, and a rapier, while from the waist up he wore a woman's sack, and had a hood on his head. The apparition dazed the soldier for a moment, when my lord made at him with the rapier, and he turned and ran, giving the alarm, however. We took to our heels and gained the causeway, when the French fired a regular fusillade after us, although not a shot struck; and our own people, seeing us running towards them, thought we were escaped prisoners, and we got within our own lines without trouble. My lord had some valuable information to give the duke, and the adventure got out in the army and made a hero of him. The French kept monstrous quiet about it; you see, sir, we had taken the commandant himself in. My lord repaid his polite-

ness, though, by sending him a box of wine, which we knew he needed for his sick; but the commandant was the most chagrined man in the French army. They made a sortie soon after that, but it did them no good, and within a week they surrendered. The duke granted them all the honors of war, and the garrison marched out with drums beating and colors flying. They had made a gallant defence, and had not surrendered until they were starving. That was the end of my serving with the great Duke of Marlborough, for that was his last campaign. And soon after my lord left the army. And I'll be leaving his service by the toe of his boot if I don't go to him now; so good-night, sir, and excuse me if I have kept you out of bed too long."

With this Lance disappeared.

In a few minutes George was in bed, and for the first time a sudden shock of homesickness came to him. His mother would not come to him that night and kiss his forehead, as she always did. It almost drove away the story of the siege of Bouchain; but in a little while he had lapsed into a sleep, in which dreams came of Bouchain, and the earl dressed up as Madame Geoffroy, and his mother sitting by the fire smiling, and Betty playing on the harpsichord, and then deep oblivion and the soundest of sleep.

## CHAPTER VI

The two days' journey that followed were very much like the first day—an early start, two hours' rest in the middle of the day, and the night spent at a road-side tavern. On the third day they left civilization behind them, and their mid-day rest was spent in the woods. They were then upon a lower spur of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The road for the first two days had been fairly good, but on the third day the four roans had all they could do to haul the heavy coach up and down the rough highway. They stood to their work gallantly, though, and Lord Fairfax remarked that the coach could go twenty miles farther up the mountain, where he had a hunting-lodge—a sort of outpost for Greenway Court, and where the coach was stored. Glorious weather had followed them. The air was keener and colder than in the low country, and Lance produced a huge furred mantle, in which he wrapped Lord Fairfax, who sat and read unconcernedly while the coach rolled and jerked

and bumped along. George was glad to make half his day's travel on horseback, and the exercise, as a warmer-up, was so much better than the earl's fur mantle that he felt sometimes like suggesting a gallop to Lord Fairfax. But he had the wit to keep his suggestions to himself, knowing that older men can do their own thinking much better than it can be done for them by fifteen-year-old boys. George had enjoyed every moment of the trip so far. His attacks of homesickness were few, and he got over them by the philosophical reflection that he would have been cruelly disappointed if his mother had not allowed him to come. He began a letter to his mother, writing a little every day, so that if he had a chance to visit the low country it would be all ready to send at a moment's notice. He was very happy. He had in prospect a new and delightful experience in travel and association. When that was over he had the cheerful hospitality and honest gayety of his Christmas at Mount Vernon to look forward to with his brother and his sister-in-law, whom he dearly loved, and dear little Betty; and after that a return home, where he fitted naturally and easily into the position of his mother's best helper and counsellor.

The singular attraction between the man of

the world and the unsophisticated young provincial gentleman grew each day. George had never before met any one who had Lord Fairfax's store of experience, as a soldier, a courtier, a man of affairs, and a member of a great literary circle. Nothing was lost on the boy, and the earl was charmed and interested to find that a chance word dropped here and there would remain in George's memory, who would recall it at a suitable time to ask some intelligent question about it. Lord Fairfax sometimes smiled at himself when he realized how much of his time and thought and conversation were spent upon this boy, but he also realized that an intelligent and receptive young mind is in itself one of the most interesting things in the world, and when combined with the noble personality and high breeding of Madam Washington's son it was irresistible. For the first day or two he always spoke to George as "Mr. Washington," and neither one could tell the exact occasion when he dropped it for the more familiar "George." But it was done, and it put them upon a footing of affection at once. George continued to say "my lord," as that was the proper mode of address, but little by little he revealed his heart to his new friend, and Lord Fairfax read him as an open book. This was

not at first, however, for George modestly conceived himself to be a person of no consequence whatever, and was much more eager to hear the earl speak of his adventures than to tell all the ideas and protests and ambitions he cherished himself.

On the evening of the fourth day they came to a log structure at the foot of the mountains, where the coach was to be left. It was in a cleared space on an open plateau, and above them towered the great peaks of the Blue Ridge, which they must cross on horseback.

The night was bright and beautiful, a great vivid moon sailing majestically in the heavens. There was in the clearing one large cabin, with two beds in it and a large press, besides a table and some chairs. In a smaller cabin two or three men lived the year round, while built on to that was a substantial coach-house, where the great chariot was stored, except when the earl went upon his lowland journeys in state. When the cavalcade stopped in the clearing Lord Fairfax alighted and walked into the large cabin, followed by George. A fire roared upon the broad, rude hearth, and in ten minutes Lance had unlocked the press, had taken from it some bedlinen and blankets, and had made up the beds and laid the table. Supper had

been prepared in advance, and, as Lance was an excellent cook, it was not to be despised—in particular a great saddle of venison, which had been hanging up for a week in anticipation of the earl's arrival. George could hardly have told what part of the day's journey he always enjoyed most, but these suppers, with the earl's entertaining conversation, and his own healthy young appetite, and the delicious sense of well-being when he drew up to the fire afterwards, to listen and ask questions, were perfectly delightful to him.

When they were seated at the table and about half through supper, Lord Fairfax asked, smiling:

"How do you like the uncivilized wilderness, George?"

"But this is not the uncivilized wilderness yet," answered George, smiling too. "We have a table and chairs, and knives and forks and plates, and beds and blankets, and silver candlesticks."

"Still, it is the wilderness, and from now on we must depend upon ourselves for company. The true meaning of the wilderness is, absence from the haunts of men. We shall be entirely alone at Greenway, except for a few negroes and Indians. You will probably not see a white

face, except mine and Lance's, until you leave me."

"It will be quite enough, sir," replied George. "I would rather be with a few people that I like than with a great crowd that I don't like."

"I felt the same in my youth. Afterwards there were circumstances in my life which inclined me to solitude. I came to Virginia in search of it, and I found it; and I also found peace. Once a year I go to the low country—to Belvoir, my cousin William Fairfax's; to your brother's at Mount Vernon; sometimes to see Colonel Byrd at Westover; but I always return to my own fastness gladly. I feel more cheerful now than at any time since we started. My old friends—my books—are waiting for me in my library; I can only take a dozen with me when I go away. My doves and pigeons, my dogs and horses, will all be the happier for my return home. My servants will be glad to have me back—poor souls, they have but a dull time of it all the year round; and I myself, having lived this life so long, find that it suits me. I shall have your company for several weeks; then I shall want you again next year."

"Next year, sir, I shall be sixteen, and perhaps I shall not be my own master. I may be in

his majesty's service. But if I can come to you again, you may be sure I will."

When supper was over the earl drew his chair up to the fire, and, still wrapped in his fur mantle —for the bitter wind blew through the cracks and crannies of the cabin—sat in a reverie with his deep eyes fixed on the blaze. George had meant that night to ask him something about the siege of Bouchain, but he saw that the earl was deep in thought, and so said nothing. He began to wonder what his mother and Betty were doing at that time. It was after supper at Ferry Farm, too. His mother was knitting by the table in the parlor, with two candles burning, and Betty was practising at the harpsichord. In his mother's bedroom—"the chamber," as it was called in Virginia—a fire was burning, and around the hearth were gathered the household servants picking the seed from the cotton which, when warmed by the fire, came out easily. This they did while waiting until they were dismissed at nine o'clock. What was Billy doing? and Rattler? While thinking these thoughts George dropped asleep, and slept soundly until Lance waked him raking down the ashes and preparing for the night.

Next morning George wakened early, as he supposed, seeing how dark it was; but the

sound of the rain upon the roof proved that it was not so early, after all. He glanced through one of the two small windows of the cabin and saw the water coming down in torrents. A regular mountain storm was upon them. George sighed as he realized this. It meant weather-bound for several days, as the roads across the mountains would be likely to be impassable after such a storm. And so it proved. For four days there was only an occasional let up in the downpour. Luckily, no snow fell. And Lord Fairfax observed his young guest narrowly in these days of being cooped up in a cabin, and found him less impatient than might have been expected. George, seeing the elaborate preparations that Lance always made for the earl's comfort, imagined that he would ill support the inconveniences of their enforced delay; but it proved exactly the contrary. Lord Fairfax was not only patient but gay under such annoyances as a leak in the roof and their rations being reduced to corn-bread and smoked venison.

"It reminds me of our old days in the Low Countries," he said to Lance the fourth night they spent at the cabin.

"Yes, my lord; but, saving your honor's presence, we would have thought this a palace in those days. I don't think I ever was dry all

over, and warm all over, and had as much as I could eat from the time I went to the Low Countries until after we had taken Bouchain, sir."

"Lance has told me about that adventure, sir," said George, slyly, hoping to hear something more from Lord Fairfax about it.

"Pshaw!" cried the earl, smiling, "Lance is in his dotage, and can talk of nothing but what happened thirty or forty years ago. Our expedition was a mere prank. I found out nothing, and risked not only my life but this poor fellow's without warrant."

"The duke, sir," said Lance, very respectfully, "was of another mind. And, sir, I have never thought of Madame Geoffroy, and her fits and her fainting and her furbelows, these thirty-five years without laughing."

At which George went off into such convulsions of laughter that Lord Fairfax knew Lance had told him the whole story.

After four days of stormy weather it became clear and cold. They were only twenty miles from Greenway Court, but the earl sent a man ahead to find out if the streams were fordable, and whether it were yet worth while to start. The man came back the next day about sunset, saying it would be possible for them to get to Greenway Court the next day.

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Although George had stood the confinement in the cabin stoically, he was delighted to be on the move again, and both he and the earl relished their last supper there the more for knowing it would be the last. All the arrangements were made for an early start on horseback next morning, and at nine o'clock Lord Fairfax and George were about turning in when they heard a timid knock at the door.

Lance, with a candle in his hand, opened the door, and at first saw nothing at all; but as his eyes became accustomed to the darkness he saw a negro boy and a dog.

Lance was so surprised that he did not at first speak, but the boy piped up very promptly: "Is Marse George Washington here, suh?"

George, on hearing his name called in that voice, jumped from his chair as if he had been shot, and the next moment was standing face to face with Billy, while Rattler sprang at him with wild barks of delight. Billy's greeting was brief and to the point.

"Heah I is, Marse George, wid Rattler."

"Where on earth did you come from?" asked George, breathlessly, dragging the boy into the cabin. As the light of the fire and the candles fell upon him he looked as if he might have come three hundred miles instead of less than a

"'IS MARSE GEORGE WASHINGTON HERE, SUH?'"

hundred and fifty, he was so thin, so hollow-eyed, and gaunt. His shoes were quite gone except the uppers, and he was in rags and tatters; yet nothing could dim the joy shining in his beady black eyes, while his mouth came open as if it were on hinges. Lord Fairfax, turning in his chair, was struck by the look of rapturous delight on poor Billy's face. The boy, still grinning, answered:

"F'um Fredericksburg. I tooken de horse mos' ter de ferry, and den I tu'n him loose, kase he had sense 'nough fer ter git ter de boat by hisse'f. So arter I seen him mos' up ter de boat, me an' Rattler, we all lights out arter de kerriage fo' Black Sam an' Gumbo have time fer ter hunt fer me, an' we foller de track clean f'um Fredericksburg ter dis heah place." Billy told this as if it were the commonest thing in the world for a boy and a dog to follow a coach more than a hundred miles from home. George was so astonished he could only stare at Billy and gasp out:

"How did you manage to keep the track?"

"Dunno, suh," replied Billy, calmly. "Rattler, he know de way better 'n me. When de rains come an' I los' de wheel tracks, I say ter dat ar' dog, 'Lookee heah, dog, we is follerin' Marse George'—*he* know dat jes as well as a human;

an' I say, 'You got ter fin' dat trail an' dem tracks,' an' dat dog he know what I was talkin' 'bout, an' he wag he tail, an' den he lay he nose to de groun', an' heah we is."

The earl had laid down his book and was listening intently to Billy's story. "And what did you live on—what did you have to eat on the way—let me see—nearly eight days?"

"We didn't have nuttin much," Billy admitted. "De mornin' we lef' home I tooken a big hoe-cake an' put it in my sh'ut when warn' nobody lookin'. De fus' day I eat some, an' gin some ter de dog. Arter dat I foun' chinquapins an' ches'nuts an' some tu'nips 'long de road-side, an' I could eat dem, but de dog couldn', so I kep' dat hoe-cake fur Rattler, an' give him de las' piece yistiddy."

"Billy," asked George, with tears in his eyes, "were you *very* hungry?"

For the first time a distressed look came into the boy's face. He was at his journey's end, he was with Marse George, he had nothing more on earth to wish for; but the recollection of the hunger of those eight days—the cold, the weariness, the agonies of terror that sometimes attacked him overcame him.

"Yes, suh, I was hongry," he said, with a sob, "dat's Gord's truf; an' ef it hadn' been fur dis

heah dog you neber would ha' seed Billy no mo'. But dat dog, he go 'long snuffin', an' he were hongry too, I speck, dough he had some hoe-cake 'twell yistiddy; an' if de dog coul' hol' out, dis nigger could."

"I'll never, never forget it, Billy, as long as I live," said George, half crying.

Then Lord Fairfax spoke. "But how did you escape from being stopped on the road for a runaway?"

"Dunno, suh," responded Billy, using his favorite formula. "We didn' meet many white folks on de road, an' when we see 'em comin' we hide in de bushes. I ain' never spoke ter a human sence we lef' Fredericksburg. In de daytime we hide somewh'yar by de road an' sleep, an' we trabbel mos' all night. 'Twas de full o' de moon, an' I see dem tracks jes same as 'twas in daytime. Den, arter I los' 'em, dis heah dog, he jes keep de road hisse'f—an' here I is."

"Lance," cried George, suddenly, "please get something to eat for him—anything—everything you have!"

Billy's eyes glistened as, in a moment, Lance whipped out of the press some cold meat and bread, and he attacked it ravenously. Meanwhile, George fed the dog, which was evidently the least starved of the two. When Billy had

eaten up everything that could be produced for him, he quietly curled himself up near the fire, and in half a minute he was sleeping the sleep of the just.

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Lord Fairfax of George.

"Keep him with me if you will allow me, sir."

"But what will your mother say? He seems to be a strong boy—his journey proves that—and he no doubt has his work at Ferry Farm."

George smiled at the recollection of Billy's "work."

"I don't think, my lord, that Billy is of the slightest use at Ferry Farm unless I am there. My mother, who believes in everybody's being industrious, has done her best to make him work. So have his father and mother, Uncle Jasper and Aunt Sukey. But except for waiting on me, and taking care of my horse, Billy will absolutely do nothing. He is not surly about it—he is always grinning and laughing and singing—but—I can't explain it exactly—he will work his fingers to the bone for me, but he won't work for anybody else."

"I should not think Billy a very useful member of society," remarked Lord Fairfax.

George said not a word, but he did not like

aspersions of any kind on Billy. Seeing this, Lord Fairfax said, in his usual kind tone:

"If it gives you pleasure, you must, of course, keep him with you—and indeed there is nothing else to be done that I can see; and as you say he is no good to your mother when you are not at home, perhaps he is better off here. He seems a faithful little soul, and I am not surprised that you are touched at his devotion."

George's face assumed an entirely different expression, but he merely said, "Thank you, sir," and in a few minutes after, throwing a bear-robe over Billy, George went to bed himself, with Rattler curled up by him.

Next morning they took the road soon after sunrise. Billy, who had enough of walking for some time to come, was mounted on one of the pack-horses. Two saddle-horses had been brought down from Greenway for the earl and his young guest, and together they led the procession along the rough mountain road. The scenery was wildly beautiful. Occasionally they wound along mighty precipices, where the horses could scarcely pick their way. Again they forded mountain streams that could only be breasted by the most tremendous exertions. They made their way through a great cleft in the mountains about midday, and began to descend towards the valleys.

The distance was but twenty miles, yet so difficult was the road that it was late in the short autumn afternoon before Lord Fairfax, pointing to a collection of roofs that lay directly below them in a sheltered part of the valley, said to George, "There is Greenway Court."

By sunset they were riding up the rough road that led to the house.

It was a large, low building, with stables and offices projecting on each side. The foundation was of stone, rudely but strongly cemented. Half-way up the story and a half which constituted the building the stone ceased, and logs, neatly and even artistically mortised together, were carried to the roof. The effect was not unpleasing, especially as many of the original forest trees had been left, and the building blended well with its surroundings. Broad and shallow stone steps led up to the main entrance, and two great oak doors studded with nails gave entrance to it. George noticed that all of the windows were provided with stout iron-bound shutters, with holes for musketry in them. The door was also pierced for defence, and a very slight examination showed that, if well garrisoned, the building could be converted into a tolerably strong block-house. The earl, as if reading the thoughts in George's mind, remarked:

"We have to be provided here for attacks from the Indians, incited by the French. The French have determined to extend their encroachments eastward and southward by a chain of forts, and I make no doubt that they contemplate a line that will extend from Canada to Louisiana. They use the Indians as secret though powerful allies, and by encouraging them to harry and murder the whites in this wild part of the colony of Virginia, they think that it will be abandoned, and that they can advance their outposts this far. Greenway Court has withstood one siege, and can withstand another. There is a spring directly under the house, and, having some knowledge of mechanics, I have concealed the source, which is at a distance from the house, and we get the spring-water by merely going down into the cellar. Then I keep constantly on hand, in this same cellar, stores of provisions and ammunition, so we are well able to defend ourselves, even against burning—for the Indians have found out the use of the torch against white men's dwellings. However, I hope we shall have no bouts with them while you are with us."

George said nothing, but he would have been more or less than a boy if he had not longed in his heart for a bout with the savages, of which he had heard much but seen little.

## CHAPTER VII

Inside, Greenway Court was not devoid of comfort, and even of luxury. The main hall was open to the roof, and, like all the rooms in the house, the rafters were left bare, and the walls rough cast in a sort of brown plaster not unpleasing to the eye. In every room there was a huge fireplace with great iron fire-dogs. In some of the guest-chambers were the vast curtained beds of the period, but in Lord Fairfax's own room was a small iron bedstead that he had used in his campaigns when a young man. His library communicated with his bedroom, and was by far the most luxurious room in the whole quaint building. It was lined with books from the floor to the low ceiling—George had never seen so many books in all his life before. There were also a few portraits and one or two busts. Over the mantel two swords were crossed—one a cavalry sword, and the other a delicate rapier such as officers in the foot regiments used at that day. George's eyes fell upon them as soon as he and the earl entered the room.

"The sword was the one I had the honor to use in my campaigns under Marlborough, and the rapier"—here Lord Fairfax smiled a little—"I had concealed about me when I entered Bouchain in disguise."

After supper was over Lance showed George into a room with one of the gigantic four-posters in it. The floor was covered with bear-skins, and Billy was instructed to roll himself up in them for a bed, which he did with much satisfaction, with Rattler on top of him, as soon as George was in bed, which was not long in being accomplished.

Next morning George was up and around early, looking about the place. He had never seen the mountains before, and was deeply impressed by their grandeur, but in his heart he preferred blue water.

The scenery was even more striking in the blaze of the morning light than he had supposed. On every side, beyond the valley, giant peaks rose into the blue air, covered with vegetation to the very top. He understood then the profusion of bear-skins in the house, and thought what fine sport might be had in tracking big game through the deep gorges and dark forests of the region. Lance came up to him as he stood on the broad stone steps drinking in the

wild beauty of the scene, and inhaling the keen, sharp air, so unlike the softness of the lowland atmosphere.

"There is great sport hereabouts, Lance," cried George.

"Yes, sir; bears and Injuns, mostly—and rattlesnakes in season. Did you ever eat bear meat, Mr. Washington?"

"No," answered George; "but I have been told it is fine."

"I've got some, sir, for supper to-night. The bears have been feeding on persimmons and chinquapins and walnuts, and that always makes the meat of a good flavor."

"And how about the Indians?" asked George, smiling.

"Injuns and rattlesnakes have their seasons together," answered Lance, with a grim smile in reply. "They and their French friends generally keep pretty close this time of year. I don't know which I would rather receive—the French and Injuns coming as friends or enemies. Sometimes half a dozen of 'em turn up, usually in the summer—the French always pretending to be traders or something of that sort—and they bring two or three Injun bucks with them, to carry their luggage, they say; but whoever saw an Injun carrying anything but a firelock—if

he can get one? They always profess to belong to a peaceable tribe; but that's all in my eye, sir. They hang about for a day or two, asking for fresh meat or vegetables, and making out that they don't know how to get across the mountains, and all the time the French are drawing maps in their note-books and the Injuns making maps in their heads; for, Mr. Washington, your Injun is full of horse-sense about some things. He can't look ahead, or plan, or wait—all the Injuns in North America couldn't have taken Bouchain—but for killing people, quick and sure, I don't know of any soldiers quite so good as Injuns. The French, sir, have a regular plan in all their expeditions here. The last party that turned up got me to talking about the way we had repulsed the redskins—for we have stood a siege or two, sir. For answer I took the Frenchmen inside the house. I showed them that we had water, the source of which was hidden; I showed them a regular magazine, all bricked up in the cellar, and an arsenal next my lord's room, and another cellar-room full of dried provisions; and then I showed them two swivels with a plenty of suitable shot, and I said to them, very plain spoken:

"'If you come to Greenway Court, you'll have to bring artillery with you; you can't starve us

out, and to take it will cost you more than it comes to, for while it is very good in defence, it is nothing for attack.'

"So I think the Frenchies know better than to trouble us. But I am not so sure of the Injuns. They have not good heads on their shoulders about campaigns, and they don't see that it is not worth their while to trouble us; and I would not be surprised any night to find a lot of skulking savages around here, trying to burn us out, as they have tried before."

George was deeply interested in this account, but at that moment breakfast was announced, and he went in-doors.

The large, low hall was used as a dining-room, the table being drawn close to the fire. Lord Fairfax was already there, and breakfast was soon despatched.

"I hope, George," said the earl, as they rose from the table, "that you have the excellent habit of learning something every day. As a beginning, you may have Lance's services every morning for two hours to teach you fencing—not only with the rapier, but the sword exercise on horseback and afoot. It is not only well for you, as you intend entering a military life, to know this, but it is the finest exercise possible for the muscles and the eye, and also in the art

of keeping one's temper. I shall expect you to become proficient in this noble art."

"I'll try, sir," was George's modest answer.

Lord Fairfax then led the way to the room which Lance had called the arsenal. Here were all manner of arms: quaint old arquebuses and matchlocks, every sort of pistol then in use, fowling-pieces, and on a rack in a corner two dozen serviceable modern muskets, shining and polished, and evidently ready for use; then there were rapiers and small swords and broadswords and claymores and strange curved Turkish scimitars. George's eyes glittered with delight as he examined all these curious and interesting things. Presently Lance entered, and Lord Fairfax left the room. George soon found that this room and its contents were the old soldier's pride. He had some interesting story to tell about every weapon in the collection, but George cut him short with a request to begin his fencing-lesson. Lance took down the foils and masks, and, while examining them, said:

"Mr. Washington, what do you think is the first and greatest thing a man must have to learn to be a good fencer?"

"Courage," replied George.

"Courage is necessary; but no man ever learned fencing by being courageous."

"Swiftness, dexterity, keeping your eyes wide open—"

"All of them are necessary too, sir; but the great thing is good temper. If you lose your temper and fly into a passion, your adversary has you at his mercy. I never saw a man with an ungovernable temper that I couldn't knock the blade out of his hand in five minutes."

George's face fell at this.

"I am afraid, Lance," he said, "that I have a very quick temper, and a very high temper."

"Do you let it run away with you, sir?" asked Lance, passing his foil through his fingers.

"Sometimes," answered George, dejectedly; "though I have never fallen into a passion before my mother, or any woman, since I was a little boy, because it is certainly not gentleman-like to be violent where ladies are—'tis a gross insult to them, of which I would not be guilty."

"Well, sir," continued Lance, still critically examining his foil, "if you can do so much out of respect for ladies, I should think you could do a little more out of respect for yourself, and keep your temper always."

The red blood poured into George's face at this, and his angry eyes seemed to emit blue sparks. Lance, who was really nothing but a servant, daring to speak to him like that! He

straightened himself up and, in a manner that showed he had not belied himself, fixed on the old soldier a look of concentrated rage. Lance returned the look steadily. Though nominally a servant, he was a tried and trained soldier, and not to be awed by the wrath of this splendid stripling. As Lance continued to gaze at him the expression in George's face slowly changed; the color died away, leaving him paler than usual, and his eyes softened. He said nothing, but after a pause, which meant a struggle and a victory over himself, he held out his hand for the foil. Lance, with a respectful bow, handed it to him and began the lesson.

The old soldier found his pupil just what might have been expected—powerful, alert, with a wonderful quickness of the eye, and of great natural grace and agility, but impetuous and passionate, and quite unable to stand on the defensive. His temper rose, too, at the first lunge he made, and although he controlled it perfectly as regarded his words, never showing the slightest chagrin in his language, yet Lance could see that his pupil was angry from the beginning. It placed him at an immediate disadvantage. His foil flew out of his hand when he determined to grip it the hardest, and for the first time in his life he attempted a manly exercise and failed

in it. This did not sweeten his temper, and when the lesson—a long one—closed, he was mortified and vexed to the last degree. Nevertheless, he thanked Lance, and, seizing his jacket and hat, rushed out of doors, feeling that he must be alone with his wrath and chagrin. Lance put up the foils and masks with a queer look in his eyes.

"He will learn something besides the use of the sword in fencing," he said to himself.

Outside George pursued his way along a path up the mountain-side, his rage cooling, and growing more and more ashamed of himself. He thought highly of Lance, and was troubled at showing before him so much anger over a trifle; for trifle it was he realized. An hour's brisk walking brought his pulses down, and he presently retraced his steps down the mountain. He was not in the mood to observe much, though he walked back rather slowly. He reached the house at one o'clock, just as Lord Fairfax came out of his study to dinner. The table was laid as usual in the hall. Behind the earl's place stood Lance, while Billy's head just peered above George's chair.

"And how did you get on with your fencing-lesson?" was Lord Fairfax's first question.

"Very poorly, sir, I am afraid," answered

George, blushing a little. "I lost my temper, and felt as if I were fighting instead of exercising, and so I did not succeed very well."

Lord Fairfax laughed one of his peculiar, silent laughs.

"You are not the first young man who has done that. When I was a youth I was a very ungovernable one, and I remember chasing a fencing-master, who was giving me a lesson, through the streets of London until I came to myself, and was glad to call a hackney-coach and hide. A skilful adversary will very often test your temper in the beginning, and make some exasperating remark, which, in effect, renders your sword-arm powerless; for an angry man may be a fierce swordsman, but he can never be a skilful one."

George's eyes opened very wide indeed. He glanced at Lance, but the old soldier wore a perfectly impenetrable front. So that was why Lance made so free in his remarks! George reflected some moments, and came to the private conclusion that one could learn a great deal more in fencing than the art of attack and defence.

In the afternoon saddle-horses were brought, and Lord Fairfax and George started for a long ride over the mountains. Although the earl was

not, and never had been, so familiar with the woods and fields, and the beasts and birds, and every living thing which inhabited them, as his young companion, he displayed stores of information which astonished and delighted the boy. He explained to him that the French and the English were engaged in a fierce contest for a great empire, of which the country around them was the battle-field; that the lines of demarcation, north and south, were very well defined; but that neither nation would commit itself to any boundaries on the east and west, and consequently the best part of the continent was in dispute. He gave George the geography of the country as it was then understood, and showed him what vast interests were involved in the planting of a single outpost of the French. For himself, the king had granted him all the land between the Potomac and the Rappahannock, and as far west as his majesty's dominions went, which, as Lord Fairfax said, with a smile, were claimed to extend to the Pacific Ocean. Only a small part of these lands had been surveyed. He felt anxious to have the tract across the Alleghany Mountains surveyed, as it was of importance to guard against the advance of the French in that direction. He asked George if he had ever studied surveying, and on George's saying that he

had given considerable time to it, and was fond of it, the earl told him that there were fine opportunities for a surveyor in this new country, and it would be a good profession for George, provided he did not succeed in his ambition to join the army or the navy.

"I will join either one, if I can, sir, in preference to any other profession," was George's reply.

They reached home at dark, and found the cheerful welcome of a roaring fire in the great hall awaiting them. At supper Lance, with a great flourish, handed a dish to Lord Fairfax which George thought the most uninviting he had ever seen—huge lumps of something burned black; but the aroma was delicious. Seeing Lord Fairfax take one of the black lumps, George courageously followed his example, and, attacking it, found it perfectly delicious.

"Bears' paws generally taste better than they look," remarked Lord Fairfax; and George remembered that Lance had told him there would be bear meat for supper.

The evening was spent in the library, the earl reading and writing. He pointed out a smaller table than his own, in a corner, saying, "That is for you to read and write at, and to keep your books and papers on." George found writing-

materials on it, and, seating himself, wrote a long letter to little Betty, and then wrote in his journal for his mother, describing Billy's expedition, and that the boy was safe with him. He then took a volume of the *Spectator*, and soon became absorbed in it. Presently Lord Fairfax, who was watching him with pleased eyes, asked:

"What paper interests you so much, George?"

"I will read it to you, sir, if you care to hear it," George replied.

Lord Fairfax liked to be read to, and listened very gravely to the reading. George laid down the book when the paper was finished, saying, "There is no name at the end of it, sir. Most of them have Mr. Addison's or Captain Steele's or Mr. Arbuthnot's or Mr. Pickell's or some other name at the bottom, but this has none."

"I wrote that paper," remarked the earl. "I had the honor of contributing several papers to the *Spectator;* but while appreciating the honor, I did not seek the notoriety of an author, and so, except to a few persons, my writings are unknown."

George nearly dropped the book in his surprise, but he regarded Lord Fairfax's attainments with greater respect than ever.

The next day and the next and the next were passed in much the same way, only that George

no more lost his temper in fencing or in any other way. The instant he became cool and self-controlled he learned the science of the sword with great rapidity. Every morning for two hours he and Lance practised—sometimes in the arsenal, sometimes out-of-doors, when they would go through the sword-exercise on horseback.

Every day George grew fonder of the old soldier. He was a man of great natural intelligence, and could talk most sensibly upon every subject connected with the profession of arms. One thing he said remained fixed in George's mind, and was recalled many years afterwards at a very critical time. They were one morning at the stables, which were directly at the back of the house, and were resting after a bout on horseback with swords.

"Whenever there is a regular war against the Injuns, Mr. Washington, the British troops will have to learn a new sort of fighting. Before this they have never had to fight an enemy they could not see; but when it comes to fighting Injuns in a country like this, where there is a man with a gun behind every tree and rock, and where a thousand men can march so that when you look at the path you would think less than a hundred had passed over it, and when

you are fighting an enemy that has no ammunition-wagons or baggage-wagons or anything that travels on wheels—I say, Mr. Washington, there will be a good many British soldiers that will bite the dust before they find out how to fight these red warriors—for warriors they are, sir. And though it is not for me, that never was anything but a private soldier, to talk about officers, yet I know that the English officers have got more to learn about fighting in this country than the men have."

The hour came when all this returned to George with terrible force.

Within a few days after his arrival he had an opportunity to send his letter to Betty and his journal to his mother. He was very anxious to know how his mother would act on hearing of Billy's having taken French leave. But it must be admitted that Billy was of small value to anybody except George; and although Madam Washington when she wrote denounced Billy's disobedience, laziness, and general naughtiness in strong terms, she promised amnesty when he returned. George read this part of the letter to Billy, whose only comment was very philosophic.

"Missis ain' gwi' trouble me, but I 'spect mammy and daddy will gimme a whuppin'."

The prospect of the "whuppin'," however, did not materially affect Billy's happiness, who, having much to eat and little to do, and the presence of Rattler and his beloved "Marse George," had all that was essential to his happiness.

The life was so altogether new to George, and the companionship of Lord Fairfax so unlike any he had ever known before, that the boy's mind grew and developed more in the weeks he spent at Greenway than in all his previous life. For the first time he was treated as a man by a man, and all at once it made a man of him. He began to think and act like a man instead of a boy.

Lord Fairfax did not join him in his sports and hunting expeditions, but he delighted to hear of them when George would return after a hard day's tramp over the mountains in search of game. Proud was he the day he returned after having shot his first bear—a splendid black specimen, measuring over five feet from snout to tail. Old Lance, who had become a skilful trapper, took the skin off, and cured it so cleverly that not an inch of it was lost. This trophy George intended for his mother.

Every evening he spent in the library with Lord Fairfax, reading. Sometimes it was a book

of his own choice, and sometimes he read aloud to the earl, whose eyes were beginning to fail. Many of the books thus read were classical authors and scientific treatises, neither of which George had any natural fancy for. But he had the capacity to learn something from everything, and the most valuable lesson he got from his varied reading was the vast number of things of which he was ignorant compared with the small number of things he knew. This made him perfectly modest at all times.

As for Lord Fairfax, he felt himself daily growing more passionately fond, in his quiet and restrained way, of the boy. He began to look forward with apprehension to the time when he must again be alone—a feeling he had never had before. He would gladly have kept George with him always, and provided for his future; but he knew well enough that Madam Washington would never give up this noble son of hers to anybody in the world. And so the two lived together, drawing closer and closer to each other, each of a silent, strong nature—the man of the world wearied of courts and camps, and the boy in his white-souled youth knowing nothing but the joy of living and the desire of living rightly, and both were happy in their daily and hourly companionship.

## CHAPTER VIII

Indians were not an entirely new sight to George, but the few who occasionally came to Greenway were quite different from the thriftless, lazy, peaceable individuals and remnants of tribes that remained in remote parts of lower Virginia. There was an Indian village of forty or fifty in a piece of wild country about ten miles from Ferry Farm, but they were not dangerous, except to hen-roosts and pigsties; and although the men talked grandiloquently of the time when their forefathers owned the land and lived by hunting, they seemed perfectly satisfied themselves to sit and bask in the sun, smoking tobacco of the squaws' raising, and living upon grain raised by the same hard-working squaws.

But the first Indian that he saw at Greenway was altogether unlike these, and in George's eyes vastly more respectable. He came one morning, just as George and Lord Fairfax had walked out on the porch after breakfast. He strode up the path carrying on his shoulder the dressed carcass of a deer. He was of medium height, but so

superbly made and muscular that the heavy carcass seemed as light as a feather. He stalked up to the porch, and, throwing the carcass down, folded his arms with an air of supreme indifference, and waited to be addressed.

"For sale?" asked the earl.

The Indian nodded his head without speaking. Lord Fairfax called to Lance to bring his purse. Lance in a few minutes appeared, and the instant his eyes fell upon the Indian his countenance changed. Not so the Indian's, who stood looking him squarely in the eye with characteristic stolidity.

The earl counted out some money and offered it to the Indian, who took it with a grunt of satisfaction.

"Now," said the earl, "take the carcass to the kitchen, where you will find something to eat if you wish."

The Indian showed his familiarity with English by picking up the carcass and disappearing around the corner with it. As soon as he was out of hearing Lance said to the earl:

"If you please, sir, that Injun, who pretends to be a squaw man, is no less than Black Bear, one of the most bloodthirsty devils I ever knew. He was in the thick of the last attack they made on us, and I'll warrant, sir, if I could turn his

blanket back from his right shoulder I would find a hole made by a musket-ball I sent at him. It disabled him, but I can see the rascal now walking away just as coolly as if I had tickled him with a feather instead of hitting him with a lead bullet. He never in the world brought that carcass over the mountains; that is not in his line. There are more of Black Bear's sort hereabouts, you may depend on it, sir."

Lord Fairfax shrugged his shoulders.

"We are prepared for defence if they come at us, but I shall have to depend upon you, Lance, to give us warning." And the earl went quietly back to his library.

Not so George. He had an intense desire to know more of Black Bear, and went with Lance around to the back of the house.

"You won't find that Injun eating, sir; he don't want anything to eat. He wants to sneak into the house and see what sort of a place it is," said Lance.

Sure enough, when they reached the kitchen there was nothing to be seen of Black Bear, although the deer's carcass was hung up on a nail high above the ground, out of reach of the dogs. Cæsar, the cook—a fat, jolly negro, with a great white apron on—was standing in the kitchen door looking around.

"Where is the Injun who brought that deer meat here?" asked Lance.

"I'se lookin' fur him now," responded Cæsar. "I didn' heah no soun', an' when I tu'n roun' d'yar was de carkiss hangin' 'n de nail. Dem Injuns is slicker 'n cats when dey move."

Lance, followed by George, passed into the kitchen and through a short covered way which led to the lower part of the house. The covered way and the kitchen too were of the same rough stone half-way up. A few steps at the end of the covered way led down into the cellars where the arms and provisions were stored. It was quite dark down there, and Lance struck his flint and made a light. They had not gone far in the underground passage when George instinctively felt some one stealing by him. He turned quickly, and in a moment Black Bear was pinioned to the wall.

"What are you doing here?" asked Lance, gruffly.

The Indian, remaining perfectly still, said, "White man's house like rabbit-burrow. Injun get lost in it."

George, at a sign from Lance, let the Indian go, and he stalked solemnly out in front of them. Around outside, Lance said:

"What is your name?"

"Squaw man," was the Indian's laconic answer, and as the squaw men had no distinctive names it was answer enough. But Lance grinned openly at this.

"You don't look like a squaw man, but a warrior, and your name, if I know it, is Black Bear. Now, if you are a squaw man, show me how that carcass ought to be cut up; and here is some money for you if you do it right." Black Bear looked longingly at the money, but he was evidently not used to cutting up dressed meat, and he made no attempt at it. He grunted out something, and then strode off in the direction of the path up the mountain.

"There you go," apostrophized Lance, "and we shall see you before long with a firelock and a hatchet, and with a lot of other savages of your own kidney."

At dinner that day George told Lord Fairfax about finding the Indian prowling about the cellar, and Lance's suspicions.

The morning had been bright, but it grew so cold and snowy towards the afternoon that Lord Fairfax remained at home, and George took his ride alone. He had not gone but a few miles along the rugged mountain road when a furious snow-storm set in, and he quickly retraced his steps. It grew suddenly dark, but his horse was

sure of foot, and George himself knew the way home perfectly. He galloped along through the darkness and the fast-falling snow, which deadened the sound of his horse's hoofs. He was surprised, though, to see a number of tracks in the snow as he passed along. He instantly recognized moccasin tracks, and remembered Lance's prediction that the alleged squaw man had some companions with him. At one point on the road George was convinced that he heard a low whistle. He stopped his horse and turned in his saddle, but there was no sound except the crackling of the trees as the wind swept through their bare branches, and the faint sound of falling water in the distance. As he sat his horse, a perfect picture of young manhood, two stealthy eyes were fixed on him, and Black Bear, concealed behind a huge mountain-ash, noiselessly and rapidly raising a firelock, took direct aim at him. The horse, which had stood perfectly still, suddenly started as a shot rang out, and a bullet whizzed past George so close that he felt the current of air it made.

George was too astounded to move for a moment, but not more astounded than was Black Bear. Never in his life had the Indian made such a miss. Half a dozen pairs of beady black eyes had seen it, and the concealed Indians made

a sign to each other in dumb-show signifying that the white youth had a charmed life.

In another moment the horse, of its own will, as if flying from danger, started down the rocky road. George let him go on unchecked. He did not think the bullet came from the piece of a sportsman, and he had not forgotten Lance's warning.

When he reached the house he looked about for Lance, whom he found in the armory, carefully examining the muskets on the rack. Lance listened to George's story of the shot very attentively.

"As sure as you live, Mr. Washington, there were some red devils skulking about, and when they get a firelock in their hands the first thing they want to do is to kill a white man. The Frenchmen sell them muskets, and give them firewater, and set them against us. I knew, the minute I put my eyes on that copper-colored rascal, that he had murder and arson in his heart; but we'll be able to keep them off, Mr. Washington."

"Why is it that you think they want to capture this house?" asked George, thoughtfully.

"Because we have a plenty of arms and ammunition here. It is hard to get either over the mountains, and it would be a small fortune to

any Indian to get a musket and a powder-horn. Then we have dried provisions in plenty—enough to last us six months if we get nothing from the outside—and dried provisions is what the Indians fancy. And my lord is opposed to the French, and no doubt they have set the Indians against us; and then the Indians like the killing, just for the fun of the thing. I think I shall sleep with one eye open until I hear that Mr. Black Bear and his friends are no longer in this neighborhood."

That night, after supper, George and the earl talked over Lance's suspicions. Lord Fairfax thought they were not ill founded, but he was not a man to excite himself over possibilities. The talk drifted towards marksmanship, and the earl, who was an excellent shot, brought out a pair of silver-mounted pistols, small for the time. He had some bullets made of composition, which flattened out against the rough cast wall without making an indentation. George drew a target on the wall, and the earl, standing at the end of the great, low-ceiled hall, made some wonderful shots. George then took the pistols, and fairly surpassed him. The earl taught him to snuff a candle at twenty paces, and other tricks of the kind. So absorbed were they in their pastime that it was nearly midnight before they parted.

When George went to his room Billy was not to be seen; but when he was called a woolly head was poked out from under the valance of the high-post bed, and Billy chirped out:

"I'se gwi' sleep under de baid ter-night, Marse George. Mr. Lance, he talk 'bout Injuns, an' ef dey come, I ain' gwi' gin 'em no chance fer to meck a hole in dis heah nigger's skin. An' I got de dog wid me, an' ef he start ter bark, I kin choke him, so dey ain' never know dee is a dog heah."

George laughed and went to bed, but it was not to sleep. He was excited, and lay awake for what seemed hours to him. At last, about three o'clock, he noticed by the moonlight that stole in his shutterless window that the snow-storm had ceased, and the moon was shining brilliantly. He got up and looked out. The ground was covered with snow, and the radiance of the great full moon made the whole landscape of a dazzling white; the tall peaks, which reared their heads into the sky, shone like burnished silver, and seemed almost touching the vast dome of heaven. George gazed for a long time, entranced at the scene, until the moving of a faint shadow under the trees attracted his attention. His eyes were keen at all times, and particularly so that night. He waited until he became con-

vinced that there were Indian forms flitting about under the trees; then, slipping on his clothes and carrying his shoes in his hand, he noiselessly opened the door and went into the hall. As he opened the door he met Lance face to face.

"Have you seen them?" asked George, in a whisper.

"No," replied Lance; "but I wakened up just now, and something, I know not what, told me to go over the house and see if everything was all right."

George drew him to the outer door, and pointed to one of the little eye-holes. Lance peered through anxiously.

"I can't see anything, Mr. Washington; but your eyes are better than mine, and if you say there are Injuns out there I'll take your word for it."

At that moment George, who was watching at another eye-hole, saw in a corner near the house a fire smouldering on the ground. A dozen blanketed figures were crouching around it. Presently they rose, and, carrying each a long and heavy fence-rail blazing at the end, made a rush around the back of the house, and, with a thundering crash and a succession of terrific whoops, pounded the stout oaken door of the

kitchen with the burning rails. It was as if that barbaric yell in one instant wakened the house and converted it into a fortress. Lights shone at every window, the negroes appearing as if by magic, and Lord Fairfax in a dressing-gown, but with a musket in his hand, opening his door. Lance and George had made a rush for the armory, and each seized an armful of muskets. The negroes were each given a musket, and stationed at an eye-hole. Meanwhile the pounding at the kitchen door continued, and shook the house from end to end. Stout as the oaken planking was, it seemed impossible that it could long withstand such assaults.

"It is the first time the red rascals have ever had sense enough to try and batter that door down. Before this they have tried the front door," said Lance, as he and George took their station at the end of the short covered way that led to the kitchen.

The earl by this time had put on his clothes and had joined Lance and George.

"I think the door is giving way, sir," said George, quietly, to Lord Fairfax, as the sound of breaking timbers mingled with the screech of the savages.

"I know it, sir," added Lance, grimly. "We can keep the scoundrels out of the front door by

stationing men in the half-story above; but there is no way of defending the kitchen door from the inside."

"How many Indians do you think you saw, George?" asked Lord Fairfax, as coolly as if he were asking the number of cabbages in a garden.

"At least a dozen, sir."

"Then if you saw a dozen there were certainly fifty," was the earl's remark. The next moment a louder crash than before showed the door had given way, and in another instant the narrow passageway swarmed with Indians. George, mechanically following Lance's movements, raised his musket and fired straight at the incoming mob, the first hostile shot of his life. He felt a strange quiver and tremor, and an acute sensitiveness to everything that was happening around him. He stood shoulder to shoulder with Lance, and Lord Fairfax quietly moved in front of him, which he thought strange.

"Kneel down," said Lance, in quite his ordinary voice, kneeling himself so that the armed negroes behind him could fire over his head. Lord Fairfax and George did likewise. The perfect coolness and self-possession of Lance and Lord Fairfax amazed George. He had never seen old soldiers under fire before. For himself, he

THE FIGHT IN THE KITCHEN PASSAGE

felt wildly excited, and was conscious that his features were working convulsively, and his heart thumped so loudly against his ribs that he heard it over the crashing of the musket-balls. It flashed before his mind that any and every moment might be his last, and he thought of his mother and Betty; he thought of everything, in fact, except one: that he might run away. He stood as if nailed to the ground, loading and firing faster than he ever did in his life, and so accurately that both the earl and Lance had time to be astonished; but it was merely the habit of doing things quickly and accurately which kept his hands and brain at work automatically, while his nerves were being racked as those of all creatures are when brought face to face with the red death. He saw the Indians swarming into the narrow passageway, and recognized Black Bear at their head. They had tomahawks as well as muskets, but they did not get near enough to use their hatchets. The steady fusillade checked their advance after the first onset, and they fell back a little, leaving one gaunt body upon the ground.

All at once George's senses seemed to return to him, and he felt as calm and unshaken as either the earl or Lance. He turned to the earl and said:

"The two swivels are in the cellar directly back of us, and on a level with us. If we had one we could command this passage."

"Get it," replied the earl, laconically. "Take Cæsar with you—it is on wheels, you know."

George darted into the cellar, and directly the rumbling of a small gun upon a rude carriage, with the wheels cut from solid logs of wood, was heard. Cæsar was dragging the swivel out, while George followed with the powder and shot. There was now not a single Indian in the narrow passage except one lying stark before them. Without a moment's thought, George darted forward to drag the prostrate form out of the way of the gun, lest, if the Indian were dead, it might mutilate him, and if only wounded it might kill him.

As George stooped forward to lift him the Indian, who was bleeding profusely from a wounded leg, suddenly threw his left arm around George's neck, and with the other hand drew a tomahawk from under him. But George was too quick for him, and, catching his arm, lifted him bodily, and carried him back into the large passageway where they stood.

It was Black Bear.

"*You* a squaw man," was Lance's comment.

Black Bear said no word, but, raising him-

self from the ground, produced a leather thong, which he tied around his bleeding leg, rudely but not unskilfully checking the flow of blood, after which Lance tied him securely and put him in a corner.

There was now a brief pause, and the guns were reloaded, and all were prepared for a second assault, while the swivel commanded the passageway thoroughly.

"They know what is going on here," said the earl, "and their next attack will be by the front entrance."

"True, sir," responded Lance.

"Shall we leave Mr. Washington here while we reconnoitre the front of the house?" asked Lord Fairfax of Lance, who was the actual commandant of the garrison.

"I think so, sir—with Cæsar and one or two others. But keep your eye on Black Bear, Mr. Washington," said Lance, "as well as this passage." Just then the noise of an assault on the other part of the house was heard, and the whole force went over on that side, leaving George, and Cæsar the cook, and Jake the scullion, to watch the passageway.

Occasionally they could see, by the dim light of a lantern hung to the wall, a figure passing to and fro in the kitchen, and the shattered timbers

of the door, through which a white light was visible on the kitchen floor. As this part of the building was of stone, it could not be fired, so that the savages were powerless unless they could force their way in by the passage, and that they had tried unsuccessfully to do.

George remembered to have heard that wounded men suffer fearfully from thirst. There was a cedar bucket full of water on a shelf in the larger passage, with a gourd hanging by it. He told Jake to put the bucket by Black Bear, and although the Indian had sat perfectly still, not showing, even by a contraction of the brows, the agony he was suffering from his wound, he gulped the water down eagerly.

The crack of musket-shots on the other side of the house could now be heard, and it was evident that the fight was renewed, but at the same time dark faces appeared at the opening into the covered way. George, loading the swivel himself, pointed it, and, by way of a salutary warning, sent a four-pound shot screaming through the kitchen. Not an Indian showed himself after that. They had met resistance on the other side of the house too, and as the moon went slowly down the horizon in the pale gray of dawn the watchers from the eye-holes saw them draw off and take their way rapidly across the white

ground into the mountains. The snow was blood-stained in many places, showing that the musketry fire had been very effective; but the Indians were so skilful in concealing their losses, and so stoical in regard to their wounds, that it was hard to tell exactly how they had fared, except that they had been driven off.

Just as day was breaking Lord Fairfax came to George.

"You have had your first taste of ball-cartridges," said he, smiling. "What do you think of it?"

George hesitated and remained silent for a moment.

"At first," he said, "I hardly knew what I was doing. Afterwards, it seemed to me, I had never thought so quickly in my life."

"Witness the dragging out of the swivel," continued Lord Fairfax; "and let me tell you this—the difference between an ordinary general and a great general is that the ordinary man cannot think in a hurry and in the midst of terrible emergencies, but the great man thinks the better for the very things that shake and disconcert an every-day man. You may some day prove a great general, George."

The boy blushed, but said nothing. Lance had then come up. "Shall I have the carpenters go

to work directly, sir, replacing that door? By night we can have as strong a one made and hung as the one they burst in," he said.

"Certainly," replied Lord Fairfax. "Have them go all over the house and repair the damages. But first let them have breakfast, for fighting always makes men hungry. And look after that wounded man over yonder."

Lance, who had some experience in gunshot wounds, went over and examined Black Bear's injured leg carefully. He then ordered water brought, with some simple dressing, and washed and dressed the wound. Black Bear, through it all, maintained his stolid silence. When, however, Lance had him picked up by two stalwart negroes and carried into their quarters, where a fire was burning, the Indian could not banish a faint expression of surprise from his countenance. He had heard that the white men treated prisoners well, but he had no correct idea of what good treatment to prisoners meant. He was given a good breakfast, at which he was utterly astounded, but which he ate with a true Indian appetite. He gave no sign of feeling, however, except a grunt of approval.

When George was relieved from his post he went to his room. As soon as he entered he saw Billy's ashy face, with his eyes nearly popping

out of his head, emerging from under the bed, while Rattler gave a yelp of delight.

"Lord a'mighty, Marse George, I never tho't ter see you ag'in!" exclaimed Billy, fervently. "All de time dem balls was poppin' me an' Rattler was thinkin' 'bout you, an' when I hear one big gun a-gwine off I jest holler out loud, 'Marse George done daid—I know he done daid!'"

"I might have been dead a good many times for any help I had from you, you lazy scamp," responded George, severely, at which Billy burst into tears, and wailed until "Marse George" condescended to be mollified.

## CHAPTER IX

The remaining time of George's stay at Greenway Court sped on rapidly—too fast for Lord Fairfax, who realized every day how close the boy had got to his heart.

As for Lance, a real friendship had grown up between him and George, and the old soldier thought with keen regret of the impending departure.

Black Bear had remained at Greenway until his wound was well on the way to recovery, but, as Lance said, "An Injun can walk on a broken leg and climb a tree with a broken arm," so that when Black Bear considered himself recovered a white man would have thought his cure scarcely begun.

Lord Fairfax found out that the Indian was the son of Tanacharison, one of the few chiefs who were friendly to the English and unfriendly to the French. On finding this out the earl sent for Black Bear and had a long talk with him. With most Indians the idea of sparing an enemy

seemed the extreme of folly; but Black Bear was of superior intelligence, and it had dawned upon him long before that the white men knew more than the red men about most things. And when he himself became the object of kindness, when he recalled George's remembering to give him water in his agony and Lance's endeavors to cure his wound, the Indian's hard but not ignoble heart was touched. His father was reported among the wisest of the chiefs, and he had warned his tribe against taking either the French or the English side, as it was not their quarrel. Lord Fairfax found that in Black Bear, an uneducated savage who could neither read nor write, he had a man of strong natural intelligence, and one worth conciliating. He came to Greenway Court with blood and fire in his heart, and he left it peaceably inclined, and anxious for the friendship of the white men. On the eve of his departure he said to George:

"White brother, if ever you are in the Indian land and want help call on Black Bear, or Tanacharison, the great chief, who dwells on the other side of the mountains where the two rivers come together, and you will be heard as quickly as the doe hears the bleat of her young."

Next morning Black Bear had disappeared, and was no more seen.

The time came, about the middle of December, when George left Greenway Court for Mount Vernon. It was in a mild spell of weather, and advantage had to be taken of it to make the journey, as the roads were likely to be impassable later in the season. He was to travel on horseback, Billy following him on a mule and carrying the portmanteau.

The night before he left he had a long conversation with Lord Fairfax in the library. The earl gently hinted at a wish that George might remain with him always, and that ample provision would be made for him in that event; but George, with tact and gratitude, evaded the point. He felt a powerful attachment towards Lord Fairfax, but he had no mind to be anybody's son except his father's and his mother's son. The earl's last words on parting with him that night were:

"I desire you to promise me that, in any emergency of any kind—and there will be many in your life—you will call on me as your friend if not you father."

George answered, with gratitude in his heart: "I will gladly promise that, my lord; and it is great encouragement to me to feel that I have such a friend."

Next morning, after an early breakfast,

George's horse and Billy's mule were brought to the door. All the negroes were assembled to bid him good-bye. Cæsar hoped he would come back soon, but not for any more fights with Indians, and each had some good wish for him. After shaking hands with each one, George grasped Lance's hand.

"Good-bye, Lance," said he. "I never can thank you enough for what you have taught me; not only fencing, but"—here George blushed a little at the recollection of his first fencing-lesson—"teaching me to control my temper."

"You were the aptest scholar I ever had, Mr. Washington," answered the old soldier; "and as for your temper, I have never seen you anything but mild and gentle since that first day."

George then went to the library to find the earl. He had meant to say something expressive of gratitude, but all through his life words failed him when his heart was overflowing. Lord Fairfax, too, was silent for a moment; but taking down the smaller of the two swords over the mantel-piece he handed it to George.

"This sword," he said, "I wore in the service of the Great Duke. I give it to you as being worthy to wear it, and I charge you never to draw it in an unworthy cause."

"I promise you, my lord," was all that George

could say in reply; but Lord Fairfax, who was a good judge of men, knew all that was passing in the boy's heart. The two wrung each other's hands, and George, going out, mounted his horse and rode off, with Billy trotting behind on the mule, and Rattler running at his heels.

For the first few miles George felt the keen regret which every sensitive young soul must feel at leaving a place and persons dearly loved. At the point on the mountain-side where, on his way to Greenway, the earl had stopped and showed him his first view of the house, George stopped again, and looked long and sadly. But once turned from it, and out of sight of it, his mind recovered its spring. He remembered that he was on the way to Mount Vernon, and would soon be with his brother Laurence and his sister-in-law, whom he dearly loved. Then there was little Mildred, a baby girl when he had been at Mount Vernon a year before. He wondered how big she was then. And Betty would be there, and he would hear from his mother, and see her soon after Christmas. On the whole, what with these pleasant prospects, and fine, clear December weather, and a good horse to ride, George began to whistle cheerfully, and presently called back to Billy:

"How do you like the notion of Christmas at Mount Vernon, Billy?"

"I likes it mightily, suh," replied Billy, very promptly. "Dee ain' no Injuns at Mount Vernon, an' dee black folks git jes as good wittles in de kitchen as de white folks gits—tuckey, an' graby, an' all de pudden dat's lef' over, an' plenty o' 'lasses, an' heap o' u'rr things."

George travelled much faster than the lumbering coach in which he had made the best part of his first journey, and he had continuous good weather. On the fourth day, in the afternoon, he shouted delightedly to Billy:

"There is the blue water, Billy!" and pointed to a silver line that glittered in the wintry sun. It was the Potomac, and a few miles' riding brought them to Mount Vernon.

As George rode up to the broad front porch a girlish figure flew out of the door, and Betty clasped him in her arms. He knew he had always loved Betty, but until then he did not fully realize how dear his only sister was to him. Then there was his brother Laurence, a handsome, military-looking man, but pale and slight in comparison with George, who was a young Hercules in development; and his sister-in-law, a pretty young woman of whom he was fond and proud. And toddling about was little Mil-

dred, whom Betty had taught to say "Uncle George," in anticipation of his arrival. All were delighted to see him, and his brother Laurence, telling him that Admiral Vernon, his old friend, for whom he had changed the name of the plantation to Mount Vernon from Hunting Creek, was visiting him, was for presenting him then and there to the admiral. But Betty interposed.

"Wait until George has changed his clothes, brother, for I am sure he looks much better in his blue-cloth jacket and his brocaded waistcoat, made of our mother's wedding-gown; and I want the admiral to think well of him at first, and—oh, George has a sword! He thinks he is a man now!"

George blushed a little, but he was very willing, boy like, to tell of how Lord Fairfax gave him the rapier, and Laurence and Mrs. Washington and Betty were all delighted, except that Betty wished it had been the one with the diamond hilt, which caused George to sniff at her ignorance.

"That was a sword that anybody could buy who had money enough; but this is a sword that has seen service, as Lord Fairfax told me. He wore it at Bouchain."

As Betty had never heard of Bouchain before, she very wisely held her peace. But she soon

dragged George off up-stairs to the little room which was his whenever he stayed at Mount Vernon, and where Billy had preceded him with the portmanteau. George was full of questions about his mother and everybody at Ferry Farm, and Betty was full of questions about Greenway Court and Lord Fairfax, so they made but little headway in their mutual inquiries. Suddenly, as George glanced out of the window towards the river, he saw a beautiful black frigate lying at anchor. It was near sunset of a clear December evening, and a pale green light was over the river, the land, and the sky. Every mast was clearly outlined, and her spars were exactly and beautifully squared in true man-of-war style. The union jack flying from her peak was distinctly visible in the evening light, and the faint echo of the bugle came softly over the water and died among the wooded hills along the shore.

George stood motionless and entranced. It was the first ship of war he had ever seen, and the beauty and majesty of the sight thrilled him to the core of his heart. Betty chattered on glibly.

"That is the frigate *Bellona*. The captain and officers are here all the time, and some of them are brother Laurence's old friends that he served with at the siege of Cartagena. I

expect some of them will be here to supper to-night. Besides Admiral Vernon, who is staying here, are Mr. William Fairfax and his son William," and Betty rattled off a dozen names, showing that the house was full for Christmas.

After Betty went out, when George, with Billy's assistance, was putting on his best clothes, he could not keep his eyes from wandering to the window, through which the *Bellona* was still seen in the waning light, looming up larger as the twilight fell. Presently he saw a boat put off with several officers, which quickly made the Mount Vernon landing.

When he was all dressed, with his fine white brocade waistcoat and his paste kneebuckles, he dearly wished to wear his sword, as gentlemen wore swords upon occasions when they were dressed for ceremony. But he felt both shy and modest about it, and at last concluded to leave it in his room. When he went down-stairs he found the lower hall was brightly illuminated with wax-candles and a glorious fire, and decked with holly and mistletoe. It was full of company, several officers being present in uniform, and one tall, handsome, gray-haired officer stood before the hearth talking with Mrs. Laurence Washington. George guessed that to be Admiral Vernon, and his guess was correct.

As he descended the last steps, and advanced to where Mrs. Laurence Washington stood, every eye that fell upon him admired him. His journey, his intercourse with a man like Lord Fairfax, and his fencing-lessons had improved his air and manner, graceful as both had been before. Mrs. Washington, laying her hand on his shoulder, which was already on a level with the admiral's, said :

"Let me present to you my brother, Mr. George Washington, who has come to spend his Christmas with us."

Admiral Vernon glanced at him keenly as he shook hands with him.

"My brother has just returned from a visit to the Earl of Fairfax, at Greenway Court, my father's relative"—for Mrs. Washington had been Anne Fairfax, of Belvoir. "The earl has been most kind to him, and honored him by giving him the sword which he wore at the siege of Bouchain."

"I believe he entered the town," said Admiral Vernon. "I have often heard of the adventure, and it was most daring."

"Why have you not the sword on, George?" asked his sister.

"Because — because —" George stammered, and then became hopelessly embarrassed.

"Because he is a modest young gentleman," said the admiral, smiling.

George was introduced to many other persons, all older than himself; but presently he recognized William Fairfax, a cousin of his sister's, who had been at Mount Vernon with him the Christmas before. William was a merry youngster, a year or two older than George, but a foot or two shorter. The two boys gravitated together, and as young gentlemen in those days were expected to be very retiring, they took their places in a corner, and when supper was announced they made up the very tail of the procession towards the dining-room. At supper the three young people—George and Betty and William Fairfax—sat together. The conversation was gay and sprightly until the ladies left, when it grew more serious.

"Close up, gentlemen, close up!" cried Laurence Washington, cordially, motioning them to take the seats left vacant by the ladies. George and William Fairfax rose to leave the room then, as boys were not expected to remain on those occasions, but Laurence stopped them.

"Stay, George and William, you are both old enough now to be company for men; and especially I desire an account from you, George, of how affairs are progressing at Greenway Court.

I hear my Lord Fairfax had to repel an attack from the Indians within the last month. That, admiral," he continued, turning to Admiral Vernon, "is one of the pleasures which Lord Fairfax exchanged for a residence in England."

"How does he stand it, Mr. Washington?" asked Admiral Vernon. "Does he remain in his eyrie among the mountains because he is too proud to acknowledge his loneliness?"

"I think not, sir," answered George. "He has a very large, comfortable house, much like a fortress. It is well furnished with everything, including books; my Lord Fairfax is the greatest reader I ever saw. He does not lead an idle life; on the contrary, he takes great interest in public affairs, and is lieutenant of the county. Especially is he concerned about our northwest boundary, and is preparing to have his lands west of the Alleghany Mountains surveyed, I believe, as much in the interest of the country as of his own, for the French are encroaching on that side."

Although George spoke with the greatest modesty, it was evident that he understood his subject. It was a deeply interesting one to all present, as it was perfectly well known that the first serious collision between the French and English in America would mean war between France and England.

Admiral Vernon and the other officers asked many questions about the temper of the Indians towards the English, the disposition of the French forts, and other matters, to all of which George gave brief but intelligent answers. After an hour spent in conversation at the table the scraping of fiddles was heard in the hall.

"Come, gentlemen," cried Laurence, "the ladies are waiting for us; we cannot be so ungallant as to remain here longer."

The large room to the right of the entrance had been cleared for dancing, and there, too, were wax-candles shining amid Christmas-greens, and a Christmas fire blazing on the hearth. On two planks placed across two wooden "crickets" sat Yellow Jake and Lef'-hand Torm, the negro fiddlers, tuning up their instruments and grinning from ear to ear. In every window merry black faces peered with beady eyes and shining ivories; for under the mild and patriarchal rule in Virginia in those days the negroes were considered as humble members of the family, who had a share in all its pleasures as in all its sorrows. There were many ladies present in hoops and powder, and with stiff brocades that rustled as they walked, and great fans, which they used in dancing the minuet as the gentlemen used their cocked hats. George, in his

heart, thought his sister Anne the handsomest of them all, and that in a year or two Betty would be a charmingly pretty girl. As it was, Mistress Betty, in her white sarcenet silk, looked a picture of modest and girlish beauty. She loved to dance; and when George came up, as the gentlemen were selecting their partners, and said, with a smile, "Come, Betty, nobody here wants to dance with a girl and boy like you and me, so we will have to dance together," Betty jumped for joy.

"If I had waited, William Fairfax would have asked me to dance," she whispered to George; "but I would much rather dance with you, because you are so much taller and older looking, and William is *such* a boy!"

William, however, was very gladly accepted later in the evening, when George, on being noticed by the other ladies, who admired his graceful manners and fine appearance, neglected Betty for them, after the manner of very young gentlemen. The first dance was a *minuet de la cour*, the most graceful and dignified of all dances. Mrs. Washington, dancing with Admiral Vernon, took the head of the room, and motioned George and Betty to take the place opposite her. The minuet was formed, the fiddlers gave an extra flourish, and the dance began, with every

lady courtesying to the ground and spreading her fan, while the gentlemen bowed so low that they swept the floor with their cocked hats. Among them all no couple were more graceful and dignified than the boy and girl. Betty danced with the utmost gravity, making her "bow, slip, slide, and pirouette" in the most daintily careful manner. George's noble figure and perfect grace were well adapted to this charming dance, and many compliments were paid both of them, which made Betty smile delightedly and George turn red with pleasure. When the stately minuet was over the fiddlers struck into Betty's favorite, the "Marquis of Huntley's Rigadoon," which was as jolly and harum-scarum as the minuet was serious and dignified. Betty in her heart liked the rigadoon best, and whispered to George that "William was good enough for the rigadoon." William therefore came forward, and the two had a wild romp to the music of two energetic fiddlers. George was rather shy about asking the ladies, all of whom were older than he, to dance; but having made the plunge, he was accepted, and afterwards poor Betty had no one to depend upon but William Fairfax, who was equally ill off for partners. No one was gayer or more gallant than the gray-haired Admiral Vernon, and the veteran

sailor and the boy George divided between them the honors of the evening.

The dance stopped early, as the next day was Christmas, and they were sure to be roused betimes; and, besides, there was to be a grand ball for all the gentry round about on Christmas night.

When George went up to his room he was very well inclined for bed from his day's travel and his evening's amusement, and Billy was snoozing comfortably before the fire, with Rattler asleep within reach. Before George slept, however, he wrote two letters — one to his mother and another to Lord Fairfax. Mount Vernon and its gayety, and the new faces he had met, had not put out of his mind the two persons so loved and admired by him. But as soon as his letters were written he tumbled into bed, and was asleep in less time than it takes to tell it.

## CHAPTER X

It seemed to George that he had not been in bed an hour before he heard, in the gray glimmer of dawn, Billy's voice, crying:

"Chris'mus, Marse George, Chris'mus! an' jes listen to dem niggers singin' under de winder!" Although a sound sleeper, George always waked quickly, and in an instant he recognized the Christmas melody that floated upward from the ground outside. A dozen or so of the field hands were marching around the house just as the first faint grayness of the Christmas Day appeared, and singing, in their rich, sweet, untrained voices, a song with the merry refrain,

> "White folks, black folks, Chris'mus am heah,
> An' Chris'mus comes but oncet a year,
> An' dis is Chris'mus mawnin'!"

Sounds showed that the house was stirring. Laurence Washington, as the master, had to dress and go down-stairs to give the singers the treat they expected. Betty got up and dressed

herself at the first sound, and, tapping on George's door, called softly, "Merry Christmas, George!" Nobody could sleep much after that, and soon after sunrise everybody was up, and "Merry Christmas" resounded through the whole house. The negroes were most vociferous, as this was their favorite holiday, and no work, except the feeding of the stock and the cutting of wood, was to be done for several days—that is, as long as the back log on the Christmas fire remained unconsumed. The putting of this log on the fire was an annual ceremony that George thought most amusing. The English officers thought so, too, and watched it with the greatest interest. Before breakfast was served, when all the guests were assembled in the hall, Uncle Manuel, the butler, who was very tall and very black, and who wore, on great occasions, a pair of scarlet satin knee-breeches that had once belonged to Laurence Washington, appeared and announced, with a condescending smile, that "de boys" had come with the back log.

Amid much grinning and shoving and jostling and chuckling four stalwart negro men walked in the house carrying a huge log, which was placed at the back of the great fireplace, upon the tall iron fire-dogs. It was of unseasoned black gum, a wood hard to burn at all times, and

this particular log had been well soaked in a neighboring swamp. It was the privilege of the negroes to select the back log, and although the masters and mistresses knew perfectly well that everything was done to make it as non-combustible as possible, the plantation joke was to pretend that it was as dry as a bone and would burn like tinder.

"We fotch you a mighty fine back lorg dis time, mistis," grinned the head man. "Hit gwi' bu'n same like lightwood." At which Mrs. Washington looked grave, as she was expected to look, while a general guffaw went around among the negroes.

"I 'spect we ain' gwi' to have no holiday 'tall ef we has to go ter wuk as soon as dis heah lorg bu'n up," chuckled another.

"' Tain' gwi' lars' mo'n fer Christmas Day!"

"I think I saw a black gum log soaking in the swamp a few days ago," said Laurence, smiling at the grinning faces before him; but there was a chorus immediately:

"Naw, suh; dis lorg ain' never had a drap o' water on it, an' we all's been dryin' it fer a whole mont'." The log was then steaming like a tea-kettle, and the negroes yah-yahed with delight at the ready acceptance of their *ruse*.

"Very well, then," cried Laurence Washing-

ton; "you can all have holiday until this log is burned out, and if I am not mistaken it will last the week through!"

Immediately after breakfast horses were brought out, and the great coach, and several gigs and chaises, to take a party to old Pohick Church. There was to be a service, however, on the *Bellona*, and the "church flag" was flying from her peak. Admiral Vernon invited George to go with him on board the ship. They went to the landing, where the captain's gig awaited them. On board the *Bellona* everything was as clean as hands could make it, the ship was dressed, and the men, being excused from work that day, were in their Sunday clothes and prepared for their holiday.

The service, performed by the chaplain, was held upon the gun-deck. Four hundred sailors, in spotless clothing and each with a sprig of mistletoe in his glazed hat, were assembled, seated on capstan-bars, which made improvised benches. In front of them their officers were assembled, the captain at their head, while in front of the officers were the admiral and his guests. Never had George seen a more beautiful and reverent service. The sailors were reminded of their homes in green England, far away, and every heart was softened by the recollection.

The officers needed no reminder of their families and friends at home, and all felt drawn together in sympathy at their common separation from those dearest to them.

After the service the admiral took George over the ship, showing him all the beauty and strength of her. The boy gazed with wonder and delight at her trim yards, her immaculate decks, and at the rows of menacing guns in her batteries. Until then he had strongly inclined to the army, but in the first flush of his new enthusiasm he longed to be a naval officer. There were several midshipmen of his own age on board, to whom the admiral introduced him, and George yearned, boy fashion, to wear a smart uniform like theirs, and to carry a midshipman's dirk. He said little; his enthusiasms were all of that silent kind which burn the more furiously because their blaze is concealed. But the moment he reached the house, after leaving the ship, he went straight to his brother Laurence's study, and marched in with this bold announcement:

"Brother Laurence, I want to serve in the king's navy."

Laurence looked up smiling at George's earnest face, in which a fixed purpose was plainly seen.

"I should have preferred the army for you," responded Laurence. "But if a youngster *will* serve in the king's navy, in the king's navy he must serve."

"And will you get me my warrant?" eagerly asked George.

"The fact is," continued Laurence, "I have a midshipman's warrant offered me for you at this very time. Admiral Vernon has the privilege of nominating a midshipman on the *Bellona*, and some days ago, in speaking of your arrival, he asked me, as my old friend, if it would be agreeable to my family to appoint you in his majesty's naval service. I told him I had not yet consulted with Madam Washington, but I had no doubt whatever that it would be highly agreeable to her, and the admiral assured me that it would be at my service at any time."

George stood perfectly breathless with surprise. His first thought was that surely he was the most fortunate boy in the world. At that moment there was a knock at the door and Admiral Vernon entered.

"Ah, admiral!" cried Laurence, "you see before you a very happy lad. He is overjoyed at the notion of entering the naval service."

"It would be a thousand pities to lose so fine a fellow from the king's navy," said the admiral,

smiling. George wished to thank him, but when he tried to speak he felt a choking sensation, albeit he was so happy. It was so exactly what he wanted at that very time; and how few there are who get what they want before the wish for it has departed!

All the rest of that day George felt as if he were walking on air. He made plans for his whole life ahead, and already saw himself an admiral. He thought it would not be right to speak of this beautiful plan for him to any one until his mother knew it, and so he would give no hint to Betty, or even tell it, as he longed to do, to Billy. But when in his room in the afternoon, before the Christmas dinner, Rattler jumped upon him and licked his hands, George could not forbear whispering to him: "Good dog, your master will soon be a midshipman!" He had gone to his room to carry out his intention of reading every day something out of a useful book; but his heart was too full to read, and his book lay unopened while he sat before the fire in a happy dream, slowly passing Rattler's silky ears through his hand. From his chair he could see through his window the handsome frigate lying motionless in the stream. Some of the men were dancing on the fok'sle to the sound of a fiddle and tambour played by two of the crew.

In George's eyes, infatuated as he was with the navy, she was the stateliest beauty of a ship he had ever seen, and he thought every man on her must be altogether happy.

At five o'clock there was a grand Christmas dinner. The ladies wore their gayest gowns, the officers were in full uniform, and the other gentlemen present were in all the splendor of velvet coats and breeches and ruffled shirts. There was much laughter and many toasts, and at the end of the dinner Uncle Manuel, gorgeous in his scarlet silk breeches, entered, bearing aloft, on a huge platter, a plum-pudding blazing with blue flames, and with sprigs of mistletoe stuck in it. Afterwards, in the hall, came off the ceremony of placing the branch of mistletoe on the lantern that hung from the ceiling. Then there was great jollity and a merry scramble, for, according to the hearty custom of the time, any lady caught under the mistletoe could be kissed by any gentleman who caught her. George and William Fairfax secretly longed to act the mannish part and join in the sport, but both felt quite overcome with bashfulness at the idea, and only watched the gay doings from afar. Not so Betty, who quite assumed the young lady, and who not only treated William Fairfax as if he had been an infant, but gave herself lofty airs towards

George, whom she had heretofore regarded with the greatest respect. Then, soon after dark, the coaches of the neighboring gentry drove up with the guests. In the hall the negro fiddlers were in great force, and sawed the air from eight o'clock in the evening until daylight next morning. Besides the minuet and rigadoon there were jigs and reels, and at last everybody, young and old, danced Sir Roger de Coverley, while the candles sputtered in their sockets and the chickens crowed outside. George danced all night with the greatest enjoyment, not finding any difficulty in obtaining partners, all of the ladies being willing to dance with so handsome a stripling. Among the guests who came from a distance was a remarkably pretty young girl of about George's age, Miss Martha Dandridge. With her George danced Sir Roger de Coverley, going down the middle swinging partners, and making the grand march to the music of the crashing fiddles and dancing feet. When at last it was over, and in the gray dawn the coaches and chaises rattled off, and the ball was over, George thought it was the finest ball he had ever seen in his life.

For a week gayety and jollity prevailed at Mount Vernon. There were fox-hunts, when the huntsmen assembled by daybreak, and the

"SHE WAS THE STATELIEST BEAUTY OF A SHIP HE HAD EVER SEEN"

winding of the horns, and the hounds with tongues tuned like bells, echoed across the river and among the hills; and after a day's hard riding there would be a jolly dinner and dancing afterwards. Then there was a great party aboard of the *Bellona*, where the decorations were all of flags and warlike emblems. George's enthusiasm for the navy did not decrease in the least, but rather gained by being in company with so many officers, and feeling obliged to keep his delightful secret of a promised commission to himself. He became friends with the midshipmen, and in his heart he enjoyed more his visits to the cockpit, with all its discomforts, than the luxury of the admiral's cabin and the comfort of the wardroom. He was never weary of listening to the officers telling of their adventures; and his expressive young face, with the blood coming and going like a girl's, showed his overpowering interest in what he heard. No real doubt of his mother's consent entered his mind; and if the thought occasionally crossed him that her consent must be asked and might not be given, he dismissed it, as all young and ardent natures dismiss unpleasant possibilities.

Among the quieter pleasures which he had at this time was that of making friends with little

Mildred, the two-year-old daughter to which his brother and sister were so devoted. They had lost three other children; and in a time of the utmost sadness after their deaths, when Laurence Washington realized his own delicate constitution, and the chances that none of his children might live, he had made his will, giving Mount Vernon and all he had, if he should leave no children, to George. But this little one bade fair to grow up into a healthy and happy child.

Betty, who was by nature a little mother, was never more at home than when she had charge of the child, and could take as good care of her as any grown person. George, on the contrary, although his heart went out to the little girl, regarded her as a piece of china that might be broken by touching her. But Mildred took a violent fancy to him, and was never so happy as when carried about in his strong young arms, or sitting on his knee while he made rabbits out of his handkerchief and pictures out of the shadows on the wall, and was ready to do anything and to give her anything that would amuse her. He had never been thrown with a child of that age before, and regarded every instance of her baby cleverness as the most extraordinary thing in the world, to the amusement of his brother and sister.

The year before George had found William Fairfax a delightful boyish companion, but this year, with his new experiences, and the company of the young officers on the *Bellona*, George unconsciously neglected him. But William, who had a sweet and forgiving nature, showed no ill-humor over it, and said to himself: "Never mind; when the ship goes away, and all the visitors, George will again find me good company."

And such was the case. On the morning that the *Bellona* loosed her top-sail, as a sign that she was about to trip her anchor, George felt utterly forlorn. He wondered how he should get through the time until he could go to Ferry Farm and, securing his mother's consent, join the ship before she sailed from the Chesapeake. So eager was he that Laurence, in the goodness of his heart, had ordered, at his own expense, George's uniforms to be made in Alexandria, and he was given his side-arms from the stores on board the *Bellona*. George in fancy already saw himself Midshipman Washington. Admiral Vernon, on parting, had said some kind words to him which sank deep in his heart. "I shall look forward with pleasure to your joining, Mr. Washington," he said. "It is just such youngsters as you that we want in the navy." George thanked him with shining eyes.

On a bleak January day the *Bellona* went out. George watched from the shore as long as he could see her, and sighed as he turned back to the house. On his way back he was joined by William Fairfax.

"George," said William, diffidently, "I am afraid we are not as good friends as we were last year."

"Why?" asked George, in surprise. He had almost forgotten William's existence in the last few busy and exciting days, and he had felt so immeasurably older than he that companionship seemed out of the question.

"Because," said William, "you do not seem to care for my company any longer."

George stopped, and his heart and his conscience smote him. William was his sister's cousin and his brother's guest, and he had been neglected by both George and Betty; for Betty had grown about ten years, in her own estimation, since dancing with officers and being allowed to come to the first table. George thought this rather ridiculous of Betty; but was it not equally ridiculous of him to lord it over William, as if there were twenty years between them, instead of William being actually older than he?

"I see how it is, William," said George, after

a pause. "I dare say I have often made a fool of myself in this last week, talking to men as if I were their equal, and to boys of my own age as if I were a man. But, although you may laugh at me, I do feel a great deal older in the last two months — I suppose because I have been with men like Lord Fairfax and Lance, and then Admiral Vernon and his officers. But if you will be friends again with me I will promise not to treat you as I have done, and I acknowledge it was not very gentlemanly of me."

William was of too gentle a nature to resist this, and the two boys in five minutes were as good friends as ever. George recalled how silently William had borne neglect, how ready he had been to be friends again, and he wondered if he himself had so much generosity.

The house seemed strangely quiet after all the company had left, and there were no more routs and balls and romping and hunting. Snow had fallen, and George and Betty were waiting for good weather before attempting the journey back to Ferry Farm. George spoke to Betty about William, acknowledging that he had been as much to blame as she; and Betty, being of a generous nature, felt ashamed of herself, with the result that William enjoyed the latter

part of the time much more than the first. But he was destined to have one more clash with George before their friendship became so firmly cemented that it lasted during the whole of their lives.

## CHAPTER XI

One night, some days after this, George was awakened in the middle of the night by hearing persons stirring in the house. He rose, and, slipping on his clothes, softly opened his door. Laurence Washington, fully dressed, was standing in the hall.

"What is the matter, brother?" asked George.

"The child Mildred is ill," answered Laurence, in much agitation. "It seems to be written that no child of mine shall live. Dr. Craik has been sent for, but he is so long in coming that I am afraid she will die before he reaches here."

"I will fetch him, brother," said George, in a resolute manner. "I will go for Dr. Craik, and if I cannot get him I will go to Alexandria for another doctor."

He ran down-stairs and to the stable, and in five minutes he had saddled the best horse in the stable and was off for Dr. Craik's, five miles away. As he galloped on through the darkness, plunging through the snow, and taking all the

short cuts he could find, his heart stood still for fear the little girl might die. He loved her dearly—all her baby ways and childish fondness for himself coming back to him with the sharpest pain—and his brother and sister, whose hopes were bound up in her. George thought, if the child's life could be spared, he would give more than he could tell.

He reached Dr. Craik's after a hard ride. The barking of the dogs, as he rode into the yard, wakened the doctor, and he came to the door with a candle in his hand, and in his dressing-gown. In a few words George told his business, and begged the doctor to start at once for Mount Vernon. No message had been received, and at that very time the negro messenger, who had mistaken the road, was at least five miles off, going in the opposite direction.

"How am I to get to Mount Vernon?" asked the doctor. "As you know, I only keep two horses. One I lent to a neighbor yesterday, and to-night, when I got home from my round, my other horse was dead lame."

"Ride this horse back!" cried George. "I can walk easily enough; but there must be a doctor at Mount Vernon to-night. If you could have seen my brother's face—I did not see my poor sister, but—"

"Very well," answered the doctor, coolly. "I never delay a moment when it is possible to get to a patient; and if you will trudge the five miles home I will be at Mount Vernon as soon as this horse can take me there."

Dr. Craik went into the house to get his saddle-bags, and in a few minutes he appeared, fully prepared, and, mounting the horse, started for Mount Vernon at a sharp canter.

George set out on his long and disagreeable tramp. He was a good walker, but the snow troubled him, and it was nearly daylight before he found himself in sight of the house. Lights were moving about, and, with a sinking heart, George felt a presentiment that his little playmate was hovering between life and death. When he entered the hall he found a fire burning, and William Fairfax sitting by it. No one had slept at Mount Vernon that night. George was weary and wet up to his knees, but his first thought was for little Mildred.

"She is still very ill, I believe," said William. "Dr. Craik came, and Cousin Anne met him at the door, and she burst into tears. The doctor said you were walking back, and Cousin Anne said, 'I will always love George the better for this night.'"

George went softly up the stairs and listened

at the nursery door. He tapped, and Betty opened the door a little. He could see the child's crib drawn up to the fire, the doctor hanging over it, while the poor father and mother clung together a little way off.

"She is no worse," whispered Betty.

With this sorry comfort George went to his room and changed his clothes. As he came down-stairs he saw his brother and sister go down before him for a little respite after their long watch; but on reaching the hall no one was there but William Fairfax, standing in the same place before the hearth. George went up and began to warm his chilled limbs. Then William made the most indiscreet speech of his life—one of those things which, uninspired by malice, and the mere outspoken word of a heedless person, are yet capable of doing infinite harm and causing extreme pain.

"George," said he, "you know if Mildred dies you will get Mount Vernon and all your brother's fortune."

George literally glared at William. His temper, naturally violent, blazed within him, and his nerves, through fatigue and anxiety and his long walk, not being under his usual control, he felt capable of throttling William where he stood.

"Do you mean to say—do you think that I want my brother's child to die?—that I—"

George spoke in a voice of concentrated rage that frightened William, who could only stammer, "I thought—perhaps—I—I—"

The next word was lost, for George, hitting out from the shoulder, struck William full in the chest, who fell over as if he had been shot.

The blow brought back George's reason. He stood amazed and ashamed at his own violence and folly. William rose without a word, and looked him squarely in the eye; he was conscious that his words, though foolish, did not deserve a blow. He was no match physically for George, but he was not in the least afraid of him. Some one else, however, besides the two boys had witnessed the scene. Laurence Washington, quietly opening wide a door that had been ajar, walked into the hall, followed by his wife, and said, calmly:

"George, did I not see you strike a most unmanly blow just now — a blow upon a boy smaller than yourself, a guest in this house, and at a time when such things are particularly shocking?"

George, his face as pale as death and unable to raise his eyes from the floor, replied, in a low voice, "Yes, brother, and I think I was crazy for

a moment. I ask William's pardon, and yours, and my sister's—"

Laurence continued to look at him with stern and, as George felt, just displeasure; but Mrs. Washington came forward, and, laying her hand on his shoulder, said, sweetly :

"You were very wrong, George; but I heard it all, and I do not believe that anything could make you wish our child to die. Your giving up your horse to the doctor shows how much you love her, and I, for one, forgive you for what you have done."

"Thank you, sister," answered George; but he could not raise his eyes. He had never in all his life felt so ashamed of himself. In a minute or two he recovered himself, and held out his hand to William.

"I was wrong too, George," said William; "I ought not to have said what I did, and I am willing to be friends again."

The two boys shook hands, and without one word each knew that he had a friend forever in the other one. And presently Dr. Craik came down-stairs, saying cheerfully to Mrs. Washington :

"Madam, your little one is asleep, and I think the worst is past."

For some days the child continued ill, and

George's anxiety about her, his wish to do something for her in spite of his boyish incapacity to do so, showed how fond he was of her. She began to mend, however, and George was delighted to find that she was never better satisfied than when carried about in his strong young arms. William Fairfax, who was far from being a foolish fellow, in spite of his silly speech, grew to be heartily ashamed of the suspicion that George would be glad to profit by the little girl's death when he saw how patiently George would amuse her hour after hour, and how willingly he would give up his beloved hunting and shooting to stay with her.

In the early part of January the time came when George and Betty must return to Ferry Farm. George went the more cheerfully, as he imagined it would be his last visit to his mother before joining his ship. Laurence was also of this opinion, and George's warrant as midshipman had been duly received. He had written to Madam Washington of Admiral Vernon's offer, but he had received no letter from her in reply. This, however, he supposed was due to Madam Washington's expectation of soon seeing George, and he thought her consent absolutely certain.

On a mild January morning George and Betty

left Mount Vernon for home in a two-wheeled chaise, which Laurence Washington sent as a present to his step-mother. In the box under the seat were packed Betty's white sarcenet silk and George's clothes, including three smart uniforms. The possession of these made George feel several years older than William Fairfax, who started for school the same day. The rapier which Lord Fairfax had given him and his midshipman's dirk, which he considered his most valuable belongings, were rather conspicuously displayed against the side of the chaise; for George was but a boy, after all, and delighted in these evidences of his approaching manhood. His precious commission was in his breast-pocket. Billy was to travel on the trunk-rack behind the chaise, and was quite content to dangle his legs from Mount Vernon to Ferry Farm, while Rattler trotted along beside them. Usually it was a good day's journey, but in winter, when the roads were bad, it was necessary to stop over a night on the way. It had been determined to make this stop at the home of Colonel Fielding Lewis, an old friend of both Madam Washington and Laurence Washington.

All of the Mount Vernon family, white and black, were assembled on the porch, directly after breakfast, to say good-bye to the young

travellers. William Fairfax, on horseback, was to start in another direction. Little Mildred, in her black mammy's arms, was kept in the hall, away from the raw winter air. Betty kissed her a dozen times, and cried a little; but when George took her in his arms, and, after holding her silently to his breast, handed her back to her mammy, the little girl clung to him and cried so piteously that George had to unlock her baby arms from around his neck and run away.

On the porch his brother and sister waited for him, and Laurence said:

"I desire you, George, to deliver the chaise to your mother, from me, with my respectful compliments, and hopes that she will soon make use of it to visit us at Mount Vernon. For yourself, let me hear from you by the first hand. The *Bellona* will be in the Chesapeake within a month, and probably up this river, and you are now prepared to join at a moment's notice."

George's heart was too full for many words, but his flushed and beaming face showed how pleased he was at the prospect. Laurence, however, could read George's boyish heart very well, and smiled at the boy's delight. Both Betty and himself kissed and thanked their sister for her kindness, and, after they had said good-bye

to William, and shook hands with all the house-servants, the chaise rattled off.

Betty had by nature one of the sunniest tempers in the world, and, instead of going back glumly and unwillingly to her modest home after the gayeties and splendors of Mount Vernon, congratulated herself on having had so merry a time, and was full of gratitude to her mother for allowing her to come. And then she was alone with George, and had a chance to ask him dozens of things that she had not thought of in the bustle at Mount Vernon; so the two drove along merrily, Betty chattering a good deal, and George talking much more than he usually did.

They reached Barn Elms before sunset, and met with a cordial welcome from Colonel Lewis and the large family of children and guests that could always be found in the Virginia country-houses of those days. At supper a long table was filled, mostly with merry young people. Among them was young Fielding Lewis, a handsome fellow a little older than George, and there was also Miss Martha Dandridge, the handsome young lady with whom George had danced Sir Roger de Coverley on Christmas night at Mount Vernon. In the evening the drawing-room floor was cleared, and everybody danced, Colonel Lewis himself, a portly gentleman of sixty, leading off

the rigadoon with Betty, which George again danced with Martha Dandridge. They had so merry a time that they were sorry to leave next morning. Colonel Lewis urged them to stay, but George felt they must return home, more particularly as it was the first time that he and Betty had been trusted to make a journey alone.

All that day they travelled, and about sunset, when within five miles of home, a tire came off one of the wheels of the new chaise, and they had to stop at a blacksmith's shop on the road-side to have it mended. Billy, however, was sent ahead to tell their mother that they were coming, and George was in hopes that Billy's sins would be overlooked, considering the news he brought, and the delightful excitement of the meeting.

The blacksmith was slow, and the wheel was in a bad condition, so it was nearly eight o'clock of a January night before they were in the gate at Ferry Farm. It was wide open, the house was lighted up, and in the doorway stood Madam Washington and the three little boys. Every negro, big and little, on the place was assembled, and shouts of "Howdy, Marse George! Howdy, Miss Betty!" resounded. The dogs barked with pleasure at recognizing George and Betty, and the commotion was great.

As soon as they reached the door Betty jumped out, before the chaise came to a standstill, and rushed into her mother's arms. She was quickly followed by George, who, much taller than his mother, folded her in a close embrace, and then the boys were hugged and kissed. Madam Washington led him into the house, and looked him all over with pride and delight, he was so grown, so manly; his very walk had acquired a new grace, such as comes from association with graceful and polished society. She was brimming with pride, but she only allowed herself to say:

"How much you have grown, my son!"

"And the chaise is yours, mother," struck in Betty. "Brother Laurence sent it you — all lined inside with green damask, and a stuffed seat, and room for a trunk behind, and a box under the seat."

George rather resented this on Betty's part, as he thought he had the first right to make so important an announcement as the gift of a chaise, and said, with a severe look at Betty:

"My brother sent it you, mother, with his respectful compliments, and hopes that the first use you will make of it will be to visit him and my sister at Mount Vernon."

Betty, however, was in no mood to be set back

by a trifling snub like that, so she at once plunged into a description of the gayeties at Mount Vernon. This was interrupted by supper, which had been kept for them, and then it was nine o'clock, and Betty was nearly falling asleep, and George too, was tired, and it was the hour for family prayers. For the first time in months George read prayers at his mother's request, and she added a special thanksgiving for the return of her two children in health and happiness, and then it was bedtime. Madam Washington had not once mentioned his midshipman's warrant to George. This did not occur to him until he was in bed, and then, with the light heart of youth, he dismissed it as a mere accident. No doubt she was as proud as he, although the parting would be hard on both, but it must come in some form or other, and no matter how long or how far, they never could love each other any less—and George fell asleep to dream that he was carrying the *Bellona* into action in the most gallant style possible.

Next morning he was up and on horseback early, riding over the place, and thinking with half regret and half joy that he would soon be far away from the simple plantation life. At breakfast Betty talked so incessantly and the little boys were so full of questions that Madam

Washington had no opportunity for serious talk, but as soon as it was over she said:

"Will you come to my room, George?"

"In a minute, mother," answered George, rising and darting up-stairs.

He would show himself to her in his uniform. He had the natural pride in it that might have been expected, and, as he slipped quickly into it and put the dashing cap on his fair hair and stuck his dirk into his belt, he could not help a thrill of boyish vanity. He went straight to his mother's room, where she stood awaiting him.

The first glance at her face struck a chill to his heart. There was a look of pale and quiet determination upon it that was far from encouraging. Nevertheless, George spoke up promptly.

"My warrant, mother, is up-stairs, sent me, as my brother wrote you, by Admiral Vernon. And my brother, out of his kindness, had all my outfit made for me in Alexandria. I am to join the *Bellona* frigate within the month."

"Will you read this letter, my son?" was Madam Washington's answer, handing him a letter.

George took it from her. He recognized the handwriting of his uncle, Joseph Ball, in England. It ran, after the beginning: "'I understand you are advised and have some thoughts

of putting your son George to sea.'" George stopped in surprise, and looked at his mother.

"I suppose," she said, quietly, "that he has heard that your brother Laurence mentioned to me months ago that you wished to join the king's land or sea service, but my brother's words are singularly apt now."

George continued to read.

"'I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject, for they will press him from ship to ship, where he has fifty shillings a month, and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a dog.'"

George read this with amazement.

"My uncle evidently does not understand that I never had any intention of going to sea as a common sailor," he said, his face flushing, "and I am astonished that he should think such a thing."

"Read on," said his mother, quietly.

"'And as to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are so many gaping for it here who have interest, and he has none.'"

George folded the letter, and handed it back to his mother respectfully.

"Forgive me, mother," said he, "but I think my uncle Joseph a very ignorant man, and especially ignorant of my prospects in life."

"George!" cried his mother, reproachfully.

George remained silent. He saw coming an impending conflict, the first of their lives, between his mother and himself.

"My brother," said Madam Washington, after a pause, "is a man of the world. He knows much more than I, a woman who has seen but little of it, and much more than a youth like you, George."

"He does not know better than my brother, who has been the best and kindest of brothers, who thought he was doing me the greatest service in getting me this warrant, and who, at his own expense, prepared me for it."

Both mother and son spoke calmly, and even quietly, but two red spots burned in Madam Washington's face, while George felt himself growing whiter every moment.

"Your brother, doubtless, meant kindly towards you, and for that I shall be ever grateful; but I never gave my consent—I shall never give it," she said.

"I am sorry to hear you say that, mother," answered George, presently—"more sorry than I know how to say. For, although you are my dear

and honored mother, you cannot choose my life for me, provided the life I choose is respectable, and I live honestly and like a gentleman, as I always shall, I hope."

The mother and son faced each other, pale and determined. It struck home to Madam Washington that she could not now clip her eaglet's wings. She asked, in a low voice:

"Do you intend to disobey me, my son?"

"Don't force me to do it, mother!" cried George, losing his calmness, and becoming deeply agitated. "I think my honor is engaged to my brother and Admiral Vernon, and I feel in my heart that I have a right to choose my own future course. I promise you that I will never discredit you; but I cannot—I cannot obey you in this."

"You do refuse, then, my son?" said Madam Washington. She spoke in a low voice, and her beautiful eyes looked straight into George's as if challenging him to resist her influence; but George, although his own eyes filled with tears, yet answered her gently:

"Mother, I must."

Madam Washington said no more, but turned away from him. The boy's heart and mind were in a whirl. Some involuntary power seemed compelling him to act as he did, without any voli-

tion on his part. Suddenly his mother turned, with tears streaming down her face, and, coming swiftly towards him, clasped him in her arms.

"My son, my best-loved child!" she cried, weeping. "Do not break my heart by leaving me. I did not know until this moment how much I loved you. It is hard for a parent to plead with a child, but I beg, I implore you, if you have any regard for your mother's peace of mind, to give up the sea." And with sobs and tears, such as George had never before seen her shed, she clung to him and covered his face and hair, and even his hands, with kisses.

The boy stood motionless, stunned by an outbreak of emotion so unlike anything he had ever seen in his mother before. Calm, reticent, and undemonstrative, she had showed a Spartan firmness in her treatment of her children until this moment. In a flash like lightning George saw that it was not that foolish letter which had influenced her, but there was a fierceness of mother love, all unsuspected in that deep and quiet nature, for him, and for him alone. This trembling, sobbing woman, calling him all fond names, and saying to him, "George, I would go upon my knees if that would move you," his mother! And the appeal overpowered him as much by its novelty as its power. Like her he began to

tremble, and when she saw this she held him closer to her, and cried, "My son, will you abandon me, or will you abandon your own will this once?"

There was a short pause, and then George spoke, in a voice he scarcely knew, it was so strange:

"Mother, I will give up my commission."

## CHAPTER XII

As soon as George had spoken he disengaged himself gently from his mother's arms. She was still weeping, but blessing him.

"God will reward you, my son, for this yielding to your mother!" she cried.

"I don't know, mother, whether I deserve a reward or not," he answered, in the same strange voice in which he had first spoken. "I am not sure whether I am doing right or not, but I know I could not do otherwise. I did not yield to your command, but to your entreaty. But let me go, mother." And before she could stop him he was out of the room, and she heard his quick step up the stairs and his door locked after him.

He tore off his uniform as if every shred of it burned him, put on his ordinary clothes, and then, sitting down on the bed, gazed blankly before him.

And blank looked the life before him. He had suffered himself to dwell upon the thought of a naval or military career until it had become a

part of his life. He foresaw that the same strange weakness on his mother's part which kept him from joining the navy might keep him out of the army. True, if there should be war between the French and English in the Northwest it would be his duty to defend his country, and no pleadings could keep him back then; but that was only a contingency. And, in any event, he could not again ask the help, in getting a commission, of the only persons who could serve him—his brother Laurence and Lord Fairfax—after this unfortunate ending of his first attempt. And, worst of all, he was not sure that he was right, and he was very sure his mother was wrong. That of itself was a staggering blow. He had always fancied his mother perfect, and her weakness, her blind partiality for him over the rest of her children, at once shattered his ideal. She was a true and devoted mother, but in a great emergency she showed a tender unwisdom that seemed foreign to her character. George did not love her any the less for this, but he realized that after this he must think and act for himself. She had not thought of how far he was committed in the matter, or that his brother Laurence might be justly offended at his course—she only thought of the anguish of giving him up. It was all hard and inscrutable to the boy, sitting with rigid face and

dry eyes, gazing before him and seeing nothing. He did not know how long he sat there. He heard Betty's light step and lighter tap upon the door, and she called him, softly, through the key-hole.

"Go away, dear Betty," answered George; "I can't see anybody just now."

It seemed to him days, not hours, before he heard the bell for dinner. He gathered himself together and went down-stairs. Betty almost cried out when she saw him, he was so haggard. His mother saw it too, and it made her heart ache; but in her heart she felt that it was better to have him as he was than to say good-bye to him forever, which she was firmly persuaded would be the case had he gone in the navy. Madam Washington, being naturally a woman of great integrity, was not at ease in her mind. She had not forgotten the light in which she would appear before Laurence Washington and Lord Fairfax. She read again and again that letter from Joseph Ball, which George had appalled her by calling both ignorant and foolish. She had been taught to think brother Joseph a monument of wisdom; but she was not so sure of it after having acted on his advice in this great event.

At dinner both George and his mother were

perfectly composed and polite. Neither the children nor the servants knew that anything was the matter until Betty betrayed it. But little Betty's heart was so full for George's disappointment that she could not eat her dinner, and tears dropped upon her plate. Towards the last of the dinner one of the little boys suddenly exclaimed:

"Brother, I saw you in your uniform this morning; are you going to wear it every day?"

At this Betty burst into a loud sob, and, getting up from the table, rushed to George and threw her arms about him. George rose and led the weeping girl out of the room. Usually such an infraction of discipline and table manners as George and Betty leaving the table without permission would have been strictly prohibited. But their mother saw that these two young souls were wrought up to the keenest distress, and as she had gained her victory she could afford to be magnanimous.

"Betty," said George, hurriedly, when they got out of the room, "put on your hood, and let us go into the woods. It makes one feel better, when one is sad, to go into the woods."

The day was dull and overcast as the boy and girl, hand in hand, tramped across the fields to where the fringe of cedars formed the advance guard of the woodlands. George held Betty's

hand very tightly in his. *She* understood him, at least.

They said but little until they were well in the heart of the woods, and had sat down upon a fallen tree. Then George, laying his head on Betty's shoulder, burst into tears, and cried as if his heart would break.

No creature was ever better formed to feel for others than sweet little Betty. She had never seen George weep like that; but she was not frightened or disconcerted. She only laid her wet cheek against George's, and sighed so deeply that he knew that his burden lay as heavy on her heart as on his. Presently, when he had become more composed, Betty spoke:

"Brother, hard as it is, I am glad of one thing —nobody can say anything to you about it, after you have said that you gave way to our mother, for no boy, or man either, can let anybody in the world find fault with his mother."

"Yes, Betty," answered George, sadly. "I will not be such a poltroon as to let any one say my mother has not acted right."

"She meant to act right," said Betty; "but—" Betty paused, and the brother and sister looked into each other's eyes and said no more, but each understood the other.

"Of course," sighed Betty, "it would have

been the hardest thing in the world to have you go away; but if you wanted to go, dear George, and it was best for you, *I* would have given you up, and I would have tried not to cry when you went away, and I would have thought of you every single day while you were away, and if you had not come home for ten years, or twenty years, I would have loved you just as much as ever."

George had always loved Betty dearly, but he felt now, at the hour of his cruelest disappointment, what it was to have that tender sister, to whom he could reveal his whole heart. Much as he loved his brother Laurence, deeply as he revered Lord Fairfax, and with all his love and reverence for his mother, he felt obliged to keep up before them a manly fortitude; but Betty was young and inexperienced like himself, and, because of that, in some ways she was nearer to him than anybody else.

The two sat there until late in the afternoon, and so quiet were they that a squirrel came boldly out of his hole and hopped past them, and a robin, with a weak little pretence of a song, in spite of the wintry weather, swung within reach of them. It was nearly sunset before they took their way homeward. George, like all boys, was not glib of tongue in expressing his emotions;

but when they got to the edge of the woods he kissed her, and said :

" Betty, I don't know what I would have done if it hadn't been for you this miserable day."

The little sister's loyal heart grew almost happy at this.

A hard task remained for George. He had to write to his brother Laurence and to Lord Fairfax, announcing what he had done. They were not easy letters to write, but he carefully refrained from any hint of blame upon his mother.

Madam Washington, having gained her heart's desire, could not now do too much for George. He was already far advanced beyond Mr. Hobby's school, and his mother determined to have a tutor for him. Nothing was too good for him now ; his tutor must be a university man, with every qualification in family and manners, as well as learning. But there was no such person within reach, and communication in those days being slow and uncertain, there seemed no immediate chance of finding one. George went his way calmly, but with his disappointment eating into his heart. He studied surveying, in which he was already proficient, with Mr. Hobby ; but he did nothing else. Even his beloved hunting and shooting palled upon him. He would spend the day at work, having Mr. Hobby's help in the

afternoon, and at night he would work out at home what he had done during the day. Mother and son never failed in courtesy and even affection for each other—indeed, Madam Washington lavished affection upon him in a manner hitherto unknown to him, but there was a little shadow between them.

Heretofore George had not escaped being lectured for his youthful shortcomings, but no fault was ever found with him now. Even Billy's laziness was excused, and he might be as idle as he pleased; like his young master, he enjoyed a complete immunity from fault-finding. This was not a natural or a healthy way for the mother and son to live; and one day, when George walked in and laid a letter from Lord Fairfax in his mother's hand, saying, simply, "I think I should like that, mother," Madam Washington, with one sharp pang, felt that they must part—at least, for a while.

The letter was brief, and had no mention of the warrant in the navy, by which George subtly understood that Lord Fairfax knew it was a delicate subject, and would say nothing about it. The earl wrote, however, that he had determined to have his lands across the mountains surveyed during the coming summer, and offered George for it a sum of money so large that to the boy's

unsophisticated mind it seemed a fortune. But Lord Fairfax stipulated that George should have a license from the State of Virginia, as his surveys would no doubt often be called in question, and there must be a recorded proof of his efficiency.

Madam Washington sighed deeply, yet there was no doubt that he must go. He would be sixteen within a few days, and he was already as developed in mind and body as a young man of nineteen. Her plans for his further education seemed impossible to realize, and it was plain there was but one thing to do—to let him go. She told him so that night, and the first gleam of sunshine came into his face that she had seen since the day after his return home. Betty's comment was like her.

"If you want to go, George, I want you to go; but it will be doleful at Ferry Farm without you."

George immediately made preparations for his examination in surveying, and, having passed it successfully, and got his certificate, he was ready to start on his journey as soon as the spring should open. He wrote to his brother Laurence stating his plan, and saying he would spend a night at Mount Vernon on his way. Laurence had shown the same consideration for George's

feelings that Lord Fairfax had, and, in reply to the letter returning the midshipman's warrant, had merely said that he regretted he had not known of Madam Washington's determination sooner. One sentence at the end touched George: "Your little niece is well, but she is but a frail child, and I have a presentiment that Mount Vernon will never come to any child of mine. For that reason, as you will some day be master of this place, I would like to have you here as often and as long as your mother can spare you. My own constitution is delicate, and nothing is more probable than that you will have Mount Vernon for your own before you are of age."

Madam Washington made the preparations for George's departure with a steady cheerfulness that belied her sad heart. She herself proposed that he should take Billy along. She offered him such a considerable sum of money that George knew she must be depriving herself of many things, and refused to take it all. In every way there was a strong though silent purpose to make up to him for her one moment of weakness. George felt this, and when, on the morning of his departure, his mother bade him good-bye with a smile on her pale lips, he felt a softening of the heart towards her that lasted not only during this separation but through

all the coming years with their tremendous events.

Little Betty wept torrents of tears, protesting all the time—"Dear George, I am glad for you to go—I don't want you to stay—I can't help crying a little, though."

George held her in his arms with a full heart, and wished that he had words to tell her how much she was to him; but Betty understood well enough. When the last farewells were said, and George was out of sight of his mother's brave smile and Betty's tears, a sudden revulsion of feeling came to him, as it does to all healthy young natures. He had got to the very extremity of his despair, and there was a strong reaction. He was essentially a boy of action, and action was now before him. Indeed, he was no longer a boy, but a man, with responsibilities upon him that seldom fall to young people of his years. He had his surveyor's license in his pocket, and upon the use he made of it might depend not only issues of property, but of peace and war; because he knew that the unsettled state of the frontier was the real reason why Lord Fairfax meant to have the wild lands in his grant surveyed. The day was bright, it was in the spring-time, and he was well mounted on a good horse. Billy, riding a stout cart-horse and carry-

ing the saddle-bags, was behind him, and Rattler was trotting by his side. Things might be worse, thought George, as he struck into a canter and wondered that his heart was so blithe. He would see his brother and sister that night, and little Mildred, and in a few days more he would be again at Greenway with the earl and old Lance; and he would have all the books he wanted to read, and fencing whenever he liked. He wondered how much he had forgotten of it; he had not fenced since leaving Mount Vernon at Christmas. But neither had he read or done anything else, it seemed to George, so blank was the time from the day he came home until then. Billy hankered after the flesh-pots of Mount Vernon, where things were conducted on a much grander scale than at the simple Ferry Farm homestead. George heard him chuckling to himself, and, turning in the saddle, asked:

"What pleases you so, Billy?"

"Tuckey, suh," answered Billy, promptly, "wid sassages roun' dee necks—an' oshters an' sp'yarribs an' chines an' goose, an' all dem things dee black folks gits in de kitchen at Mount Vernon."

It was a good forty-five miles to Mount Vernon, but George made it by eight o'clock that night.

His brother and sister were delighted to see

him, and little Mildred had not forgotten him. After a traveller's supper George told them all his plans. He passed quickly over the giving up of his midshipman's warrant, merely saying, "My mother begged me not to leave her for the sea, and I consented. But," he added, after a pause, "it nearly broke my heart."

He was distressed to see his brother looking pale and thin, and still more so at the despondent tone Laurence took about himself. He would have had George go into the study, and there with him discuss the present state of the place and its future management, as if he were certain that one day it would be George's; but this the boy flatly refused.

"No, brother," he said, "I can only inherit Mount Vernon through misfortune to you and yours; and do you suppose I like to think about that? Indeed I do not; and I neither think nor care about what you do on the place, except that it shall be for your own satisfaction."

The next morning George was off, much to the regret of his brother and sister, and also to Billy, who had promised himself a regular carnival in the Mount Vernon kitchen.

The road was the same that George had taken nearly five months before, on his first expedition to Greenway Court. Then it had been at the

fall of the leaf, and now it was at the bursting of the spring. Already the live-oaks and poplars were showing a faint and silvery green, and in sheltered, sunny spots grass was sprouting. The watercourses were high from the melting of the snow, and fording them was not always without difficulty and even danger. At every mile that George travelled his mind and heart gained a better balance by quick degrees. He was sorry to be parted from his mother and Betty, but he was at a time of life when he must try his own strength, and he was the better for it. He stopped at the same taverns that he had halted at when with Lord Fairfax. Billy proved himself to be an excellent hostler as well as valet, and George did not mean to forget mentioning to his mother, when he should have an opportunity of sending a letter, how extremely useful Billy was. On the fourth day, being well up in the mountains, they came to Lord Fairfax's coach-house, as it was called, but instead of stopping George pushed on to Greenway Court, much to Billy's disgust, who had no taste for long journeys on traveller's fare. On a March night, that, although cool, had a touch of spring in the air, and under a glorious moon George rode up to the door at Greenway Court, and joyfully dismounted. Lord Fairfax did not know the

exact day to expect him, but knew he would arrive about that time. When George's loud rat-tat resounded upon the great oak doors, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to have them opened by old Lance, who said, as if he had seen George half an hour before:

"Good-evening, Mr. Washington; my lord is expecting you. Billy, take the horses around to the stable."

George walked in, and almost ran into the earl's arms. Lord Fairfax was overjoyed to see him, and, although he did not say much, his pleasure shone in his eyes. George's room was ready for him; there was a fine young half-thoroughbred in the stables that was waiting for George's saddle and bridle to be put on him; Lance had some bears' paws for his supper whenever he should arrive; there were some books on surveying imported from England for him. Had he been Lord Fairfax's son and heir he could not have been received with greater consideration. The earl could not do enough for him. It was:

"Lance, is Mr. Washington's room prepared for him?"

"Yes, sir. It has been ready for a week."

"And, Lance, Mr. Washington will probably want you in the morning in the armory."

"Yes, sir; I shall be at Mr. Washington's orders," and a dozen other similar marks of tender forethought, more like a woman than a man. George could not but think how easy it was to be amiable and high-toned amid such surroundings.

As soon as supper was over George displayed proudly his license as surveyor, and would have plunged into the affair of the surveys at once, but Lord Fairfax gave the first intimation then that he did not consider George a full-fledged man.

"Never mind for to-night, George. Very young gentlemen like you are apt to go at things like a hunter at a five-barred gate, but you can wait awhile. Besides, you must go to bed early after your journey, so as to get sleep—a thing that growing boys cannot do without."

George felt several years younger at this speech, and blushed a little for his mannish airs, but the earl's advice about going to bed was sound, and in five minutes after finding himself in the great high-post bed he was sleeping the sleep of healthy and active boyhood.

## CHAPTER XIII

Some weeks were spent at Greenway Court, and George slipped back into the same life he had led for so long in the autumn. Instead, however, of reading in the evenings, Lord Fairfax and himself spent the time in studying rude maps of the region to be explored, and talking over the labors of the coming summer. The earl told George that William Fairfax had heard of the proposed expedition, and was so anxious to go as George's assistant that his father was disposed to gratify him if it could be arranged.

"But I shall not communicate with him until I have talked with you, George," said the earl, "for William, although a hardy youngster, and with some knowledge of surveying, is still but a lad, and there might be serious business in hand. However, this season's surveys are not to be far from here, so that if you care for his company I see no reason why he should not go."

"I should be very glad to have him," replied George, blushing a little. "I did a very un-

handsome thing to William Fairfax while we were at Mount Vernon at Christmas, and he was so manful about it that I think more of him than ever, and I believe he would be an excellent helper."

"An unhandsome thing?" repeated the earl, in a tone of inquiry.

"Knocked him sprawling, sir, in my brother's house. My brother was very much offended with me, and I was ashamed of myself."

"But you are good friends now?"

"Better than ever, sir, for William behaved as well as I behaved ill, and if he is willing to come with me I shall be glad to have him."

"I shall send an express, then, to Belvoir, and William will be here in a few days. And now I have something else to propose to you. My man Lance is very anxious to see the new country, although he has not directly asked my permission to go; but the poor fellow has served me so faithfully that I feel like indulging him. Only a lettered man, my dear George, can stand with cheerfulness this solitude month after month and year after year as I do, and, although Lance is a man of great natural intelligence, he never read a book through in his life, so that his time is often heavy on his hands. I think a few months of mountaineering would be a godsend

to him in his lonely life up here, and I make no doubt at all that you would be glad to have him with you."

"Glad, sir! I would be more glad than I can say. But what is to become of you without Lance?"

"I can get on tolerably well without him for a time," replied the earl, smiling. And the unspoken thought in his mind was, "And I shall feel sure that there is a watchful and responsible person in company with the two youngsters I shall send out."

"And Billy, of course, will go with me," said George, meditatively. "Why, my lord, it will be a pleasure jaunt."

"Get all the happiness you can out of it, George; I have no fear that you will neglect your work."

Within two weeks from that day William Fairfax had arrived, and the party was ready to start. It was then the first of April, and not much field-work could be done until May. But Lord Fairfax found it impossible to hold in his young protégés. As for Lance, he was the most eager of the lot to get away. Cut off from association with his own class, nothing but his devotion to Lord Fairfax made the isolated life at Greenway Court endurable to him; and this pros-

pect of variety in his routine, where, to a certain degree, he could resume his campaigning habits, was a fascinating change to him.

The earl, with a smile, and a sigh at the loss of George and William's cheerful company and Lance's faithful attendance, saw them set forth at sunrise on an April morning. George, mounted on the new half-bred horse that Lord Fairfax had given him, rode side by side with William Fairfax, who was equally well mounted. He carried the most precious of his surveying instruments and two little books, closely printed, which the earl had given him the night before. One was a miniature copy of Shakespeare's plays, and the other a small volume of Addison's works.

Behind them, on one of the stout cobs commonly used by the outriders on Lord Fairfax's journeys to lower Virginia, rode Lance.

The old soldier was beaming with delight. He neither knew nor cared anything about surveying, but he was off for what he called a campaign, in company with two youths full of life and fire, and it made him feel like a colt. He had charge of the commissary, and a led-horse was loaded with the tent, the blankets, and such provisions as they could carry, although they expected their guns and fishing-rods to supply their appetites. Behind them all rode Billy on an old cart-horse.

Billy was very miserable. He had no taste for campaigning, and preferred the fare of a well-stocked kitchen to such as one could get out of woods and streams. George had been so disgusted with Billy's want of enterprise and devotion to the kitchen rations that he had sternly threatened to leave the boy behind, at which Billy had howled vociferously, and had got George's promise not to leave him. Nevertheless, a domestic life suited Billy much better than an adventurous one.

What a merry party they were when they set off! Lord Fairfax stood on the porch watching them as long as they were in sight, and when, on reaching a little knoll, both boys turned and waved their hats at him, he felt a very lonely old man, and went sadly into the quiet house.

The party travelled on over fairly good mountain roads all that day, and at night made their first camp. They were within striking distance of a good tavern, but it was not in boy nature to seek comfort and civilization when camping out was possible.

George realized the treasure he had in Lance when, in an inconceivably short time, the tent was set up and supper was being prepared. The horses were taken care of by George and William, who got from a lonely settler's clearing

a feed of corn for them. Meanwhile, with a kettle, a pan, and a gridiron, Lance had prepared a supper fit for a king, so the hungry boys declared. Billy had actually been made to go to work, and to move when he was spoken to. The first thing he was told to do by Lance was to make a fire. Billy was about to take his time to consider the proposition when Lance, who was used to military obedience, instantly drew a ramrod from one of the guns, and gave Billy a smart thwack across his knuckles with it. Billy swelled with wrath. Lance he esteemed to be a "po' white," and, as such, by no means authorized to make him stir.

"Look a-heah, man," said Billy, loftily, "you ain' got no business a-hittin' Marse George's nigger."

"I haven't, eh?" was Lance's rejoinder, giving Billy another whack. "Do you make that fire, you rapscallion, or you get no supper. And make it quick, d'ye hear? Oh, I wish I had had you in the Low Countries, under my old drill-sergeant! You would have got what Paddy gave the drum!"

Billy, thus admonished, concluded it would be better to mind, and although he felt sure that "Marse George" would give him his supper, yet he was not at present in high favor with that young gentleman, and did not want to take any risks

in the matter. However, he did not really exert himself until Lance said, severely, "I have a great mind to ask Mr. Washington to send you back to Greenway Court. It is not too far."

At that Billy suddenly became very industrious. Now George, on the other side of the tent currying his horse, heard the whole affair, and when they were called to supper he threw out a hint that his servitor might be sent back; which threat, then and forever after, acted on Billy like a galvanic battery.

George and William thought, as they sat by the fire in the woods eating their rude but palatable supper, that they were the luckiest creatures in the world. They were exhilarated rather than fatigued by their day's work. A roaring fire cast a red glare among the rocks and trees, and warmed the keen, cold air of the spring night in the mountains. Within their tent were piles of cedar boughs for beds, and blankets to cover them.

William Fairfax had never heard any of Lance's interesting stories, although George had told him of them. When supper was over, and the boys had an hour before turning in, George induced Lance to tell of some of his adventures in the wars of the Spanish Succession. They were deeply interesting, for Lance was a daring char-

acter, and had seen many strange vicissitudes. Billy and Rattler, who were not very much interested in the proceedings, dropped asleep early, and George, throwing a blanket over Billy, let him lie and snore before the fire until it was time to take to the tent. After a while Lance said:

"It was the Duke of Marlborough's way to have all the lights out early; and I think, Mr. Washington, if we want to make an early start, we had better turn in now."

George and William, nothing loath, betook themselves to their beds of boughs within the tent. Lance preferred to lie just in the doorway, the flap being left up for air. The boys noticed that he very carefully took off his shoes and washed his feet in a pail of ice-cold water brought from a spring near by.

"Why do you do that, Lance?" asked George, who thought it rather severe treatment.

"Because that's the way to keep your feet in order, sir, and to keep from taking cold in a campaign; and I recommend you and Mr. Fairfax to try it for a regular thing," answered Lance.

Within two days they reached the point where they must leave their horses and really begin their walk. They struck now into a wilderness, full of the most sublime scenery, and with a purity of air and a wild beauty of its own that

would appeal to the most sluggish imagination. George had found William Fairfax to be a first-rate camping companion, and he proved to be an equally good assistant in surveying. George was not only an accurate but a very rapid surveyor, and William was equal to every demand made upon him. Although they carried their guns along when at work, they shot but little game, leaving that to Lance, and the trapping of birds and small animals to Billy, who was always willing to forage for his dinner. They met a few Indians occasionally. Many of the Indians had never seen surveying instruments, and thought them to be something miraculous.

Lance was a genius in the way of making a camp comfortable. Although all of his experiences had been under entirely different circumstances, in an old and settled country with a flat surface, he was practical enough to transmute his knowledge to suit other conditions. He made no pretence of assisting in the field-work, but when George and William would come back to camp in the evenings, after a long day's tramp on the mountains, Lance would always be ready with a good supper, a bed of pine or cedar branches, and an endless store of tales of life in other days and other places. In the absence of books, except the two volumes given George

"BY DAYLIGHT GEORGE WAS IN THE SADDLE"

"THEY STRUCK NOW INTO THE WILDERNESS"

by Lord Fairfax, these story-tellings became a great resource to the two young fellows, and were established as a regular thing. Although Lance had been only a private soldier, and was not an educated man, he had natural military talents, and when they would talk about possibilities of war with the French upon the frontier, which was then looked upon as inevitable, Lance clearly foresaw what actually happened years afterwards. The military instinct was always active in George, and it developed marvellously. For recreation he and Lance devised many campaigns against the French and Indians, and proved, on paper at least, how easy it would be to capture every French fort and block-house from the Alleghanies to the Great Lakes. George had a provincial's enthusiastic confidence in regular troops, and was amazed to find Lance insisting that their usefulness in a campaign in the wilderness was doubtful.

"I tell you, Mr. Washington, I have seen a little of the Indian fighting, and you give a few of those red devils firelocks, with a handful of French to direct them, and there is not a general in England who would know how to fight them. And the worst of it is that the English despise the Indians, and you could not make an Englishman believe that he could not lick two French-

men until he has been licked. An English general would want roads and bridges and an artillery-train and a dozen other things that these savages never heard of, while all they want is a firelock and a tree, and they can pick off their man every time."

"Then do you think the English will not be able to hold this part of the country?" asked George.

"With the militia—yes, sir. Your provincial troops know how to fight Indians, and can get through a wilderness without making a highway like a Roman road. But, mark my words, Mr. Washington, many a brave fellow has got to lay down his life before the English learn how to fight in the woods."

These prophetic words came back vividly to George before many years had passed.

The summer came on apace. Never had George seen anything more beautiful than the outburst of tree and leaf and flower among these lonely peaks. The out-door life agreed with him perfectly, as it did with William Fairfax. They worked hard all the week, always leaving camp before sunrise, and generally not returning until after sunset. Lance always had a good fire and a capital supper waiting for them. He fashioned rude but comfortable seats and tables out of logs,

and his impromptu out-door kitchen was a model of neatness and order. He was an accomplished laundress, but, after instructing Billy in the art of washing and drying clothes, turned that branch of their housekeeping over to this young person, who worked steadily, if unwillingly. On rainy days the boys remained in their tent, with two large tarpaulins thrown over it to keep out the water. George then wrote in his journal and read one of his precious books, William reading the other. On Sundays they took turns in the morning, after the work of the camp was over, in reading the service of the Church of England to a congregation composed of Lance, Billy, and Rattler—the two latter generally going to sleep in the first five minutes.

Besides his regular work and having an eye to military operations in that region, George and William both had an opportunity to study the animals and birds the forests and mountains harbored. For the first time they had a chance of closely watching the beaver, and admiring this great engineer among beasts. They were lost in admiration at the dam constructed by him, which the most scientific engineering could not surpass. The brown bear, a good-natured creature that was always frightened at the sight of a human being, was common to them, and

deer enough to keep their larder supplied were found. Lance was a skilful fisherman, and the mountain trout was on their daily bill of fare. The only thing they feared were the snakes, but as they always wore long and stout boots, they escaped being bitten while at their work, and Lance and Billy kept a close watch on the camp, examining the tent and ground every night before they slept. It was so cold at night, however, that they were in but little danger from reptiles then, for, no matter how warm the day, by nightfall a fire was pleasant.

And so days became weeks, and weeks became months. George had begun his work with a fierce disappointment gnawing at his heart, and thought he should never live to see the day when he would not regret that he was not in the navy. But at sixteen, with health and work, despair cannot long abide. Before he knew it the pain grew less, and insensibly he found himself becoming happier. But this was not accomplished by sitting down and brooding over his troubles; it was done by hard work, by a powerful will, and the fixed determination to make the best of things. Before the summer was over he could think, without a pang, of that cruel blow he had received the day after he reached Ferry Farm.

Lord Fairfax thought he had not given George

too much time when he named the 1st of October as the date the party would probably return to Greenway Court. But on a glorious day in early September, when Lord Fairfax came in from riding over his principality in land, he saw a young figure that he well knew speeding down the road to meet him, and recognized George. The boy was much grown, and gave full promise of the six feet three that he attained in his manhood. His figure was admirably developed, his fair complexion bronzed, and his bright, expressive eyes were brilliant with health and spirits.

Lord Fairfax's pale and worn face lighted up with pleasure, and he dismounted on seeing George. Arm in arm the two walked up to the great, quaint house — the man, old before his time, and never losing the sad and wearied look that showed he had not found life all roses, and the splendid youth glowing with health and hope and brightness. Lord Fairfax asked many questions about the work, and George was equally full of questions about lowland affairs. Of these Lord Fairfax knew little, but he told George there were a number of letters for him in a desk in the library. George was all eagerness to get them, as he knew he should find letters from his mother and Betty and his brother Laurence.

As they neared the house they passed within view of the kitchen. Billy had not been off his horse's back half an hour, but he was already seated in the kitchen door, and between his knees was a huge kettle, in which were some bacon and beans. In one hand he held a tremendous hoe-cake, which he shared with Rattler, who was sitting on his haunches, with an expression of profound satisfaction very like that which irradiated Billy's dusky features. Neither George nor Lord Fairfax could forbear laughing, and Billy grinned appreciatively at them.

But on reading his letters a little later in the library George's face lost its merry smile. His mother and Betty were quite well only ten days before—which was late news for that day—but his little playmate Mildred, at Mount Vernon, was fading fast. One of Madam Washington's letters, dated about three weeks before, said:

"I have just come from a visit of eight days to Mount Vernon; your brother and sister are fairly well, although Laurence will never be of a robust constitution. But the little girl, I see, is not to be spared us long. She is now nearly three years old—older than any of Laurence's other children have lived to be — but there is a blight upon this dear little innocent,

and I doubt whether she will not be a flower in God's garden by Christmas-time — greatly to her profit, but to the everlasting grief of her sorrowing parents."

This letter made George feel as if he would like that very moment to have his horse saddled and to start for Mount Vernon. But he felt that with the great interests with which he had been trusted by Lord Fairfax it would not be right to go without giving an account of his work. He was sitting sadly enough at the library table, reading his mother's letter, when Lord Fairfax entered.

"You have bad news, George," said he, after one glance at the boy's troubled face.

"Very bad, sir," replied George, sadly. "My brother's only living child, a dear little girl, is very ill, I am afraid. My mother writes me she is fading fast. My poor brother and sister love her so much—she is the only child that has been spared them. Three others have all died before they were a year old."

"Then you want to go to Mount Vernon as soon as possible," said the earl, reading the unspoken wish in George's heart.

"Oh, sir, I do want to go; but I think I ought to stay here for some days, to show you what I have done."

"One night will be enough, if you will leave your surveys and papers with me; and perhaps I may myself go down to Mount Vernon later on, when the little one is either better on earth or eternally well in heaven."

George looked at him with eloquent eyes.

"If you will be so kind as to let me go, I will come back just as soon—" George stopped; he could say no more.

Although just come from a long journey, so vigorous and robust was George that he began at once exhibiting his surveys and papers. They were astonishingly clear, both in statement and in execution; and Lord Fairfax saw that he had no common surveyor, but a truly great and comprehensive mind in his young protégé. George asked that William Fairfax might be sent for; and, when he came, told Lord Fairfax how helpful William had been to him.

"And you did not have a single falling out while you were together?" asked Lord Fairfax, with a faint smile. At which both boys answered at the same time: "No, sir!"—William with a laugh and George with a deep blush.

All that day, and until twelve o'clock that night, George and Lord Fairfax worked on the surveys, and at midnight Lord Fairfax under-

stood everything as well as if a week had been spent in explaining it to him.

When daylight came next morning George was up and dressed, his horse and Billy's saddled and before the door, with Lord Fairfax, Lance, and William Fairfax to bid him good-bye.

"Good-bye, my lord," said George. "I hope we shall soon meet at Mount Vernon, and that the little girl may get well, after all. Good-bye, William and Lance. You have been the best of messmates; and if my work should be satisfactory, it will be due as much to you as to me."

Three days' hard travel brought him to Mount Vernon on a warm September day. As he neared the house his heart sank at the desolate air of the place. The doors and windows were all open, and the negroes with solemn faces stood about and talked in subdued tones. George rode rapidly up to the house, and, dismounting, walked in. Uncle Manuel, the venerable old butler, met him at the door, and answered the anxious inquiry in George's eyes.

"De little missis, she k'yarn lars' long. She on de way to de bosom o' de Lamb, w'har tecks keer o' little chillen," he said, solemnly.

George understood only too well. He went up-stairs to the nursery. The child, white and scarcely breathing, her yellow curls damp on her

forehead, lay in her black mammy's arms. The father and mother, clasped in each other's arms, watched with agonized eyes as the little life ebbed away. The old mammy was singing softly a negro hymn as she gently rocked the dying child

> "'De little lambs in Jesus' breas'
> He hol' 'em d'yar and giv' 'em res';
> He teck 'em by dee little hands,
> An' lead 'em th'u de pleasant lands.'"

As George stood by her, with tears running down his face, the old mammy spoke to the child. "Honey," said she, "heah Marse George; doan' you know Marse George, dat use ter ride you on he shoulder, an' make de funny little rabbits on de wall by candlelight?"

The child opened her eyes and a look of recognition came into them. George knelt down by her. She tried to put her little arms around his neck, and he gently placed them there. The mother and father knelt by her too.

"My darling," said the mother, trembling, "don't you know papa and mamma too?"

The little girl smiled, and whispered: "Yes—papa and mamma and Uncle George and my own dear mammy."

The next moment her eyes closed. Presently George asked, brokenly:

"Is she asleep?"

"Yes," calmly answered the devoted old black woman, straightening out the little body; "she 'sleep heah, but she gwi' wake up in heaben, wid her little han' in Jesus Chris's; an' He goin' teck keer of her twell we all gits d'yar. An' po' ole black mammy will see her honey chile oncet mo'."

## CHAPTER XIV

The next few weeks worked a great and serious change in George. It was the first time he had seen death since he was ten years old, when his father died. That had made a great impression on him at the time, but the feelings of a child of ten and a youth of sixteen are very different. He had loved little Mildred dearly, and the child's death was a deep sorrow to him. The grief of his brother and sister was piteous. As the case often is, the father was the more overwhelmed, and the poor mother had to stifle her own grief to help her husband. George could not but love and admire his sister the more when he saw her calm fortitude, and how, inspired by love for her husband, she bore bravely the loss of her only child. Both Madam Washington and Betty had come to Mount Vernon the day of little Mildred's death. Madam Washington was obliged to return, after a few days, to her younger children, but George and Betty remained.

"For George is the heir now," said Laurence,

with a sad smile, "and he must learn to manage what will one day be his own."

"Oh, brother," burst out George, with strange violence, "do you believe I wanted this place at the price of your child's life? I would give it all, twenty times over, to have her back!"

"If I had thought you coveted it I should never have made you my heir," was Laurence's reply to this.

Never was there a kinder or more helpful soul than Betty, now a tall and beautiful girl of fourteen. Mrs. Washington's health was much shattered by this last and greatest sorrow, and Laurence, who had always been of a delicate constitution, became every day more feeble. George attended him assiduously, rarely leaving him. He persuaded his brother to ride out and take some interest in the place. He read to Laurence of evenings in the library, and tried to interest him with accounts of the new regions in which the younger brother had spent so many months. Nothing could ever make Laurence Washington a happy man again, but by George's efforts he was saved from falling into utter melancholy.

Mrs. Washington's sorrow, though as great, was better controlled. She always managed to wear a cheerful look before her husband, and al-

though she was not able to accompany him in his out-door life, she was with him every moment he spent in-doors. Betty was to her as great a comfort as George was to Laurence Washington. Betty had so tender a heart and so excellent an understanding that she was as helpful as a woman twice her age, and these two young creatures, George and Betty, were mainstays and comforts at an age when most young creatures rely wholly on other people.

All day they were engaged, each in gentle and untiring efforts to make life a little brighter to their brother and sister. But after the older persons had retired every night George and Betty would sit up over the fire in the library and talk for hours. Their conversations were not always sad—it is not natural for the young to dwell in sadness—but they were generally serious. One night Betty said:

"Don't you think, George, we ought to write to our mother and ask her to let us stay over Christmas with brother Laurence and sister Anne? You remember how gay it was last Christmas, and how glad we were to be here? Now, I think when they are in great trouble, we ought to be as willing to stay with them as when they were happy and bright and could make us enjoy ourselves."

"Betty," answered George, in admiration, "why did I not think of this? I see it is just what we ought to do."

"Because," said Betty, promptly, "women are much more thoughtful than men, and girls are much more thoughtful than boys."

George did not dispute this, as he had been taught never to call in question any woman's goodness, and in his heart he believed them to be all as good as his mother and Betty and his sister Anne. The lesson of chivalry towards all women had been early and deeply taught him, and it was a part of the fibre of his being. "And shall I write and ask our mother to let us stay?" asked George, humbly.

"No," replied Betty, with a slight accent of scorn; "you might not ask it in the right way. I shall write myself."

Now, although Betty always assumed, when alone with George, this superior tone, yet when they were in company nothing could exceed her submissiveness towards this darling brother, and it was then George's turn to treat her with condescending kindness. But each thought this arrangement perfectly natural and mutually satisfactory. Whenever they had a discussion, though, Betty always carried the day, for she was really a girl of remarkably fine sense and

much more glib and persuasive than George, who could always be silenced, if not convinced, by Betty's ready tongue and quick wit. The next day the letter was written to Madam Washington, and within a week a reply was received giving permission for the brother and sister to remain over Christmas.

Mrs. Washington, ever thoughtful of others, made the same preparation for the holiday on the estate as usual, so that, however sad the house might be, the servants should have their share of jollity. But the tie between a kind master and mistress and their slaves was one of great affection, and especially were the white children objects of affection to the black people. Therefore, although the usual Christmas holiday was given, with all the extra allowances and indulgences, it was a quiet season at Mount Vernon. On Christmas Day, instead of the merry party in carriages going to Pohick Church, and an equally merry one going on board the *Bellona* to service, the coach only took Mr. and Mrs. Washington and Betty to church, George riding with them, for he hated a coach, and never drove when he could ride.

Meanwhile William Fairfax had returned to Belvoir, where there were Christmas festivities. George and Betty were asked, and, although

their brother and sister urged them to go, neither felt really inclined for gayety. They were not of those natures forever in pursuit of pleasure, although none could enjoy it more when it came rightly; and a native good sense and tender sympathy with others, which found no expression in words, made them both feel that they should omit no mark of respect in a case where they were so directly benefited as by the little girl's death. Laurence Washington and his wife could not admire too much George's delicacy about Mount Vernon. While he made use of the servants and the horses and carriages and boats, and everything else on the place, with the freedom of a son rather than a younger brother, no word or look escaped him that indicated he was the heir.

William Fairfax was a great resource to both George and Betty. Living a whole summer together as he and George had done, it was inevitable that they should become either very much attached or very antagonistic—and luckily they had become devotedly fond of one another. William was preparing to enter William and Mary College the following year, and George bitterly regretted that he would not have so pleasant a companion for his next summer's work. Very different were his circumstances now, the ac-

knowledged heir of a rich brother. But George determined to act as if no such thing existed, and to carry out his plan of finishing the surveys on Lord Fairfax's lands. The universal expectation of war with France, whenever the French and English outposts should get sufficiently near, made him sure that he would one day bear arms; but he prepared for whatever the future might hold for him by doing his best in the present.

In February he returned to Ferry Farm for a while, but he had only been there a month when Laurence Washington wrote, begging that he would return, and saying that he himself felt utterly unequal to carrying on the affairs of a great estate in his present wretched state of health and spirits. Madam Washington made no objection to George's return to Mount Vernon. She realized the full extent of Laurence's kind intentions towards George, and that his presence was absolutely necessary to keep the machinery of a large plantation going.

In March, therefore, George was again at Mount Vernon, practically in charge of the place. There was ploughing and ditching and draining and clearing and planting to be done, and, with a force of a hundred and fifty field-hands and eighteen hundred acres of arable land,

it was no small undertaking. By daylight George was in the saddle, going first to the stables to see the stock fed, then to the kennels, and, after breakfast, riding over the whole estate. It kept him in the open air all day, and he began to like not only the life but the responsibility. He had all the privileges of the master, Laurence leaving everything to his judgment, and his sister was glad to have it so. This continued until June, when, the crops being well advanced and Lord Fairfax having written urgently for him, he turned affairs over to the overseer until the autumn, and prepared to resume his work as a surveyor.

He paid a hurried visit to Ferry Farm, where, although he was painfully missed, things went on perfectly well, for no better farmer than Madam Washington could be found in the colony of Virginia. Indeed, George's success at Mount Vernon was due in great measure to applying the sound system in vogue at Ferry Farm to the larger interests at Mount Vernon. Madam Washington's pride in his responsible position at Mount Vernon, and his still greater responsibility as a State surveyor for Lord Fairfax, did much to reconcile her to George's long absences. Deep in her heart she cherished a pride in her eldest son that was one of the mas-

ter-passions of her life. The extreme respect that George paid her filled her with more satisfaction than the attentions of all the rest of the world. Once only had they clashed—in the matter of the midshipman's warrant. She had won a nominal victory by an appeal to his feelings, but she had no mind after that for any more battles of the sort. So with tears, but with encouraging smiles, she saw him set forth, in the summer of 1749, upon his second year's work in the wilderness.

## CHAPTER XV

George's second summer's work was less like a pleasure expedition than his first had been. He spent only a few days at Greenway Court, and then started off, not with a boy companion and old Lance, but with two hardy mountaineers, Gist and Davidson. Gist was a tall, rawboned fellow, perfectly taciturn, but of an amazing physical strength and of hardy courage. Davidson was small but alert, and, in contradistinction to Gist's taciturnity, was an inveterate talker. He had spent many years among the Indians, and, besides knowing them thoroughly, he was master of most of their dialects. Lord Fairfax had these two men in his eye for months as the best companions for George. He was to penetrate much farther into the wilderness and to come in frequent contact with the Indians, and Lord Fairfax wished and meant that he should be well equipped for it. Billy, of course, went with him, and Rattler went with Billy, for it had now got to be an accepted thing that

Billy would not be separated from his master. A strange instance of Billy's determination in this respect showed itself as soon as the second expedition was arranged. Both George and Lord Fairfax doubted the wisdom of taking the black boy along. When Billy heard of this he said to George, quite calmly :

"Ef you leave me 'hine you, Marse George, you ain' fin' no Billy when you gits back."

"How is that?" asked George.

"'Kase I gwi' starve myself. I ain' gwi' teck nuttin to eat, nor a drap o' water—I jes gwi' starve twell I die."

George laughed at this, knowing Billy to be an unconscionable eater ordinarily, and did not for a moment take him in earnest. Billy, however, for some reason understood that he was to be left at Greenway Court. George noticed two or three days afterwards that the boy seemed ill, and so weak he could hardly move. He asked about it, and Billy's reply was very prompt.

"I ain' eat nuttin sence I knowed you warn' gwi' teck me wid you, Marse George."

"But," said George, in amazement, "I never said so."

"Is you gwi' teck me?" persisted Billy.

"I don't know," replied George, puzzled by the boy. "But is it possible you have not

eaten anything since the day you asked me about it?"

"Naw, suh," said Billy, coolly. "An' I ain' gwi' eat twell you say I kin go wid you. I done th'ow my vittles to de horgs ev'ry day sence den—an' I gwi' keep it up, ef you doan' lem me go."

George was thunderstruck. Here was a case for discipline, and he was a natural disciplinarian. But where Billy was concerned George had a very weak spot, and he had an uncomfortable feeling that the simple, ignorant, devoted fellow might actually do as he threatened. Therefore he promised, in a very little while, that Billy should not be separated from him—at which Billy got up strength enough to cut the pigeon-wing, and then made a bee-line for the kitchen. George followed him, and nearly had to knock him down to keep him from eating himself ill. Lord Fairfax could not refrain from laughing when George, gravely and with much ingenuity in putting the best face on Billy's conduct, told of it, and George felt rather hurt at the earl's laughing; he did not like to be laughed at, and people always laughed at him about Billy, which vexed him exceedingly.

On this summer's journey he first became really familiar with the Indians over the moun-

tains. He came across his old acquaintance Black Bear, who showed a most un-Indian-like gratitude. He joined the camp, rather to the alarm of Gist and Davidson, who, as Davidson said, might wake up any morning and find themselves scalped. George, however, permitted Black Bear to remain, and the Indian's subsequent conduct showed the wisdom of this. He told that his father, Tanacharison, the powerful chief, was now inclined to the English, and claimed the credit of converting him. He promised George he would be safe whenever he was anywhere within the influence of Tanacharison.

George devoted his leisure to the study of the Indian dialects, and from Black Bear himself he learned much of the ways and manners and prejudices of the Indians. He spent months in arduous work, and when, on the first of October, he returned to Greenway he had proved himself to be the most capable surveyor Lord Fairfax had ever had.

The earl, in planning for the next year's work, asked George, one day, "But why, my dear George, do you lead this laborious life, when you are the heir of a magnificent property?"

George's face flushed a little.

"One does not relish very much, sir, the idea of coming into property by the death of a per-

son one loves very much, as I love my brother Laurence. And I would rather order my life as if there were no such thing in the world as inheriting Mount Vernon. As it is, I have every privilege there that any one could possibly have, and I hope my brother will live as long as I do to enjoy it."

"That is the natural way that a high-minded young man would regard it; and if your brother had not been sure of your disinterestedness you may be sure he would never have made you his heir. Grasping people seldom, with all their efforts, secure anything from others."

These two yearly visits of George's to Greenway Court—one on his way to the mountains, and the other and longer one when he returned—were the bright times of the year to the earl. This autumn he determined to accompany George back to Mount Vernon, and also to visit the Fairfaxes at Belvoir. The great coach was furbished up for the journey, the outriders' liveries were brought forth from camphor-chests, and the four roans were harnessed up. George followed the same plan as on his first journey with Lord Fairfax two years before — driving with him in the coach the first stage of the day, and riding the last stage.

On reaching Mount Vernon, George was dis-

tressed to see his brother looking thinner and feebler than ever, and Mrs. Washington was plainly anxious about him. Both were delighted to have him back, as Laurence was quite unable to attend to the vast duties of such a place, and Mrs. Washington had no one but an overseer to rely on. The society of Lord Fairfax, who was peculiarly charming and comforting to persons of a grave temperament, did much for Laurence Washington's spirits. Lord Fairfax had himself suffered, and he realized the futility of wealth and position to console the great sorrows of life.

George spent only a day or two at Mount Vernon, and then made straight for Ferry Farm. His brothers, now three fine, tall lads, with their tutor, were full of admiration for the handsome, delightful brother, of whom they saw little, but whose coming was always the most joyful event at Ferry Farm.

George was now nearing his nineteenth birthday, and the graceful, well-made youth had become one of the handsomest men of his day. As Betty stood by him on the hearth-rug the night of his arrival she looked at him gravely for a long time, and then said :

" George, you are not at all ugly. Indeed, I think you are nearly as handsome as brother Laurence before he was ill."

"Betty," replied George, looking at her critically, "let me return the compliment. You are not unhandsome, but never, never, if you live to be a hundred years old, will you be half so beautiful as our mother."

Madam Washington, standing by them, her slender figure overtopped by their fair young heads, blushed like a girl at this, and told them severely, as a mother should, that beauty counted for but little, either in this world or the next. But in the bottom of her heart the beauty of her two eldest children gave her a keen delight.

Betty was indeed a girl of whom any mother might be proud. Like George, she was tall and fair, and had the same indescribable air of distinction. She was now promoted to the dignity of a hoop and a satin petticoat, and her beautiful bright hair was done up in a knot becoming a young lady of sixteen. Although an only daughter, she was quite unspoiled, and her life was a pleasant round of duties and pleasures, with which her mother and her three younger brothers, and, above all, her dear George, were all connected. The great events in her life were her visits to Mount Vernon. Her brother and sister there regarded her rather as a daughter than a sister, and for her young sake the old house resumed a little of its former cheerfulness.

George spent several days at Ferry Farm on that visit, and was very happy. His coming was made a kind of holiday. The servants were delighted to see him, and as for Billy, the remarkable series of adventures through which he alleged he had passed made him quite a hero, and caused Uncle Jasper and Aunt Sukey to regard him with pride, as the flower of their flock, instead of the black sheep.

Billy was as fond of eating and as opposed to working as ever, but he now gave himself the airs of a man of the world, supported by his various journeys to Mount Vernon and Greenway Court, and the possession of a scarlet satin waistcoat of George's, which inspired great respect among the other negroes when he put it on. Billy loved to harangue a listening circle of black faces on the glories of Mount Vernon, of which "Marse George" was one day to be king, and Billy was to be prime-minister.

"You niggers, livin' heah on dis heah little truck-patch, ain' got no notion o' Mount Vernon," said Billy, loftily, one night, to an audience of the house servants in the "charmber." "De house is as big as de co't-house in Fredericksburg, an' when me an' Marse George gits it we gwi' buil' a gre't piece to it. An' de hosses—Lord, dem hosses! You ain' never see so many

"NEVER WILL YOU BE HALF SO BEAUTIFUL AS OUR MOTHER"

hosses sence you been born. An' de coaches—y'all thinks de Earl o' F'yarfax got a mighty fine coach—well, de ve'y oldes' an' po'es' coach at Mount Vernon is a heap finer 'n dat ar one o' Marse F'yarfax. An' when me an' Marse George gits Mount Vernon, arter Marse Laurence done daid, we all is gwine ter have a coach, lined wid white satin, same like the Earl o' F'yarfax's bes' weskit, an' de harness o' red morocky, an' solid gol' tires to de wheels. You heah me, niggers? And Marse George, he say—"

"You are the most unconscionable liar I ever knew!" shouted George, in a passion, suddenly appearing behind Billy; "and if ever I hear of your talking about what will happen at Mount Vernon, or even daring to say that it may be mine, I will make you sorry for it, as I am alive."

George was in such a rage that he picked up a hair-brush off the chest of drawers, and shied it at Billy, who dodged, and the brush went to smash on the brick hearth. At this the unregenerate Billy burst into a subdued guffaw, and, looking into George's angry eyes, chuckled:

"Hi, Marse George, you done bus' yo' ma's h'yar-bresh!" Which showed how much impression "Marse George's" wrath made on Billy.

## CHAPTER XVI

Christmas at Mount Vernon, although it could never again be the gay season it had been, was yet cheerful. The presence of Lord Fairfax and George, of Madam Washington and Betty, revived the spirits of the master and mistress. William Fairfax, now a handsome young man of eighteen, and the same mild, manly, good-natured fellow, was home from Williamsburg for the holidays. George had never been to Williamsburg, where there was a viceregal court, and where everything was conducted upon a scale adapted to a representative of royalty. He was much impressed by William's description, and the two made many plans for a holiday together, the next winter, in the capital.

"And we will attend the governor's levee—but you must not be too much of a republican, George, for the governor exacts viceregal respect—and the assemblies in the great Apollo Room at the Raleigh Tavern, and the lectures at the college by learned men from England and

Scotland. Ah, George, how you will enjoy it!" cried William.

Lord Fairfax, hearing the young men talk, felt a desire to revisit Williamsburg, a place where he had spent some happy days, and soon after this conversation, when William had already returned to college, he said, one day :

"I think, George, if your brother can spare you towards the spring, I should like to have you visit Williamsburg with me. It is now twelve years since I was there in the administration of my Lord Botetourt. He exacted every mark of respect that would have been paid to the king himself. I well remember his going in state to open the House of Burgesses, as the king opens Parliament. He rode in a gilt coach, given him by the king himself, drawn by eight milk-white horses—a very fine show ; but for all their love of finery and display themselves, the Virginians are very jealous of any on the part of their rulers, and many gentlemen who drove coaches-and-four themselves complained bitterly of the governor."

George was charmed at the prospect, and took the first opportunity of broaching the subject to Laurence.

"I think it would be very advantageous to you to see something of a viceregal court, and I will

see that you have the means to make a good appearance," was Laurence's kind reply.

"Thank you, brother," said George, gratefully. "I will have things on the place in such order that everything will go on as if I were here; and as I shall come back for some weeks before returning to the mountains, I can see whether my orders have been carried out or not."

Another summer's work would finish all the surveys Lord Fairfax wished, and it was understood that at the end of that time George was to live permanently at Mount Vernon in charge of the estate.

Madam Washington was delighted at the idea of George's advent at the provincial court under such auspices, and Betty danced for joy, and immediately plunged into a discussion of George's wardrobe for the great event.

"Timothy Jones, the tailor in Alexandria, has some fine green cloth, out of which he could make you a surtout trimmed with silver, and I saw myself an elegant piece of scarlet velvet from which a mantle to wear to court might be made. And you shall have my best Mechlin lace for your cravat. Ah, George, how I long to see you in your fine clothes!"

"I should think, Betty," replied George, smiling, "you would be more concerned about how

I will conduct myself with these great people. You know, sometimes I lose my speech entirely, and become very awkward; and sometimes I become abstracted in company, and nobody's manners are perfect at eighteen."

"Dear George," cried Betty, throwing her arms around his neck, "I think of your clothes because that is all that I need think about with you. In every other way you are sure to do us credit," which made George feel that Betty was the most good-natured creature alive.

"I wish you were going," said he, presently.

"I wish so, too," replied Betty. "But when brother Laurence gets well sister Anne has promised to take me, and my mother has said I may go," for both George and Betty, with the optimism of youth, thought it quite certain that their brother would one day be well.

The first day of February the start was made. The grand equipage set forth, with the earl and George on the back seat of the coach and Lance on the box. Billy rode George's horse, and was in ecstasies at the prospect of such an expedition. On the second day, in the evening, the coach rolled into Williamsburg. It was a lovely February evening, and the watchman was going about lighting lanterns hung to tall poles at the street corners. George had chosen to make the

last stage with the earl, and was deeply interested in all he saw. The town was as straggling as Alexandria, or as Fredericksburg, but there was that unmistakable air of a capital which the presence of the seat of government always gives. As they drove rapidly, and with great clatter and noise, down Duke of Gloucester Street, George noticed many gentlemen in both naval and military uniforms, and others in the unpowdered wig of the scholar, which last he inferred were professors and tutors at the college. Of collegians there were not a few, and George noticed they always appeared in gangs, and seemed to regard themselves as quite aloof from other persons and slightly superior to them. As the coach drove quickly through the Palace Green, with the palace on one hand and the college on the other, both were brilliantly lighted. A couple of sentries in red coats marched up and down before the palace—a long, rambling brick building with its two generous wings, and its great court-yard with fine iron gates. On top was a cupola, which was only lighted up on gala nights. On both sides of the palace were spacious gardens, with a straight canal, bordered with cedars, cut in the stiff, artificial manner of the time, and with small summer-houses, in the form of Greek temples, made of stucco. A

coach was driving out and another was driving in, while an officer, evidently an aide-de-camp, picked his way along the gravelled path that led to the side where the offices were. Opposite the palace towered the plain but substantial brick buildings of William and Mary College, and a crowd of students were going into the common hall for supper. It all seemed very grand to George's eyes, and when they alighted at the Raleigh Tavern, the tavern-keeper, wearing silk stockings and carrying two silver candlesticks, came out to meet them, and ushered them into a handsome private room, ornamented over the mantel by a print of his majesty, King George the Second. The tavern-keeper was not by any means like the sturdy citizens who kept houses of entertainment between Fredericksburg and the mountains. He "my lorded" the earl at every turn, and was evidently used to fine company. He was happy to say that he was then entertaining Sir John Peyton, of Gloucester, who had come to Williamsburg for the winter season, and Colonel Byrd, of Westover. Also, the Honorable John Tyler, marshal of the colony, was attending the governor's council upon matters of importance, and was occupying the second-best rooms in the tavern—my lord having the best, of course, according to his rank. The

earl was a little wearied with all this, but bore with it civilly until the tavern-keeper bowed himself out, when William Fairfax burst in, delighted to see them. William was neither so tall nor so handsome as George, but he was a fine young fellow, overflowing with health and spirits.

"The governor heard you were coming, sir," cried William, "and stopped his coach in the street yesterday to ask me when you would arrive. I told him you had probably started, if my advices were correct, and that you would be accompanied by Mr. George Washington, brother of Mr. Laurence Washington, now of Mount Vernon, but late of the royal army. He said he much desired to meet Mr. Washington's brother —for to tell you the truth, my lord, the governor loves rank and wealth in his provincial subjects— and, meaning to speak well for George, I told him a great deal of Mr. Laurence Washington's lands and other wealth, and he smiled, or, rather, gaped, just like a great sheepshead at a bait."

"William, you should be respectful of dignitaries," was the earl's reply, although he smiled, while George laughed outright at William's artful working upon the governor's weaknesses.

As soon as supper was over came a thundering knock upon the door, and the host ushered in

Sir John Peyton, of Gloucester, a colonial dandy, whose pride it was that he had the handsomest foot and leg in the colony. Sir John was very elegantly dressed, and carried upon his left arm a muff, which effeminate fashion he had brought from England on his last visit.

"Ah, my Lord Fairfax! Most happy to meet you," cried Sir John, affectedly. "'Tis most unkind of you to pitch your tent in the wilderness, instead of gracing the viceregal court, where gentlemen of rank and wealth are sadly needed."

"Having experienced the hollowness of a regal court, Sir John, I can withstand all the attractions of any other," was Lord Fairfax's quiet and rather sarcastic reply.

Sir John, not at all disconcerted, helped himself with a jewelled hand from a gold snuffbox, and then, leaning against the mantel, put his hands in his muff.

"By all the loves of Venus, my lord, you and your young friend Mr. Washington should see some of the beautiful young ladies here. There is Mistress Martha Dandridge—odd's life, if I were not pledged to die a bachelor I should sue for that fair maid's hand; and Lady Christine Blair—born Stewart, who met and married Mr. Blair in Edinburgh — a dull, psalm-singing town it is. Lady Christine, having great beauty,

illumines the college where her husband is professor. And the lovely, the divine Evelyn Byrd, and Mistress Tyler, who is one of those French Huguenots, and has a most bewitching French accent—all ladies worthy of your lordship's admiration."

"No doubt," replied the earl, gravely, but inwardly tickled at Sir John's ineffable impudence. "They would but slightly value the admiration of an ancient recluse like myself, and would prefer my young friends, Mr. Washington and Mr. Fairfax."

Sir John, quite unabashed, now turned to the two young men, who had difficulty in keeping their faces straight when they looked at him.

"Really, Mr. Washington, you must get a muff if you wish to be comfortable in this cursed climate. I never knew comfort till I got one in England, on the recommendation of Mr. Horace Walpole, who has the divinest taste in muffs and china I ever saw."

"I am afraid I cannot find one of a size for my hand," answered George, gravely, holding out a well-shaped but undeniably large hand.

After much more talk about Mr. Horace Walpole, the lovely Miss Berrys, and the company of comedians daily expected from London, Sir John took his leave, promising to see them at

the governor's levee next day. As soon as the door closed upon him Lord Fairfax turned to William and said, testily, "I hoped I had left all such popinjays as Sir John Peyton at court in England, but here I find the breed flourishing."

"Sir John is not half so absurd as he looks, sir," answered William, laughing. "He is as brave as a lion; and when on his last voyage home there was fire in the ship's cargo, I hear he was the coolest man on board, and by his conceits and quips and jests in the face of danger kept off a panic. And he is honorable and truthful, and he really has much sense."

"Then," cried the earl, "he does all he can to disguise it!"

Their next visitors were Colonel Byrd, of Westover, and Mr. Tyler, marshal of the colony, who ranked next the governor, and Mr. Randolph, Speaker of the House of Burgesses. The earl received these gentlemen with marked respect, placed chairs for them himself, and entered into a long and interesting conversation with them on the state of the colony. Both George and William remained modestly silent, as became young men of their age, and listened attentively. It was agreed among them all that war with the French was practically certain. The colonies were thoroughly aroused, and each of the visitors

gave it as his opinion that the colonies were willing to settle the question themselves without aid from the home government.

"And when the conflict comes," remarked Colonel Byrd, turning to the two young men, "it is to young gentlemen such as these that we must look for our safety, because, you may be sure, if the French capture our outposts they will not be satisfied until they overrun our whole lowland country, and they must be checked at the mountains if they are to be checked at all."

"My young friend, Mr. Washington, knows all about matters on the frontier, as he has surveyed my lands across the Alleghanies for two summers, and he is quite as familiar with the temper of the Indians as with the face of the country," remarked the earl.

This at once made George an object of interest to them all, and he was closely questioned. He answered everything that was asked him with such intelligence and pith that his new acquaintances formed a high idea of his sense. He often referred to William Fairfax, who had been with him the first summer, and William made also a fine impression. They sat until midnight, talking, and Lance had to renew the fire and the candles twice before the company parted.

Next morning William came betimes and burst

into George's room while that young gentleman was still in bed.

"Get up, man!" cried William, shaking him. "Here you lie sleeping like a log when you ought to be having your breakfast and making ready to see the town."

George needed no second invitation, and in a very short time was making play with his breakfast in the sitting-room reserved for Lord Fairfax. The earl was there himself, and the delightful anticipations of George and William, which were fully shared by Lance and Billy, brought a smile to his usually grave face.

Lance was simply beaming. A number of his old regiment were enrolled among the governor's body-guard, and the sight of a redcoat did him, as he said, "a world of good." As for Billy, he had reached the state of *nil admirari*, and was determined to be surprised at nothing. On the contrary, when the tavern servants had assumed that he was a country servant, Billy had completely turned the tables on them. Nothing in the Raleigh Tavern was good enough for him. He pished and pshawed in the most approved style, treated Colonel Byrd's and Marshal Tyler's servants with infinite scorn, and declined to be patronized even by Sir John Peyton's own man, who had been to London. He called them all

"cornfiel' han's," and, as the way generally is, he was taken at his own valuation, and reigned monarch of all he surveyed in the kitchen, where he gave more trouble than Lord Fairfax himself. However, one person could bring Billy down with neatness and despatch. This was Lance, who, although belonging to a class of white people that Billy despised, yet was capable of reporting him to "Marse George," so Billy was wary when Lance was around.

At three o'clock the coach came, and the earl and George set forth with outriders to attend the governor's levee. It was the first time George had ever seen the earl in court-dress. He wore a splendid suit of plum-colored satin, with ruby and diamond shoebuckles, with his diamond-hilted sword, and a powdered wig. George, too, was very elegantly dressed, and as they drove up to the palace, amid a crowd of coaches and chaises of all sorts, and dismounted, there were not two such distinguished-looking persons there. George felt decidedly flurried, although he had ample self-possession to disguise it.

They were met by the governor's guard in the great entrance-hall, who passed them on to an anteroom, where half a dozen lackeys in gorgeous liveries bowed to the ground before them. A

THE GOVERNOR'S LEVEE

great pair of folding-doors led into the audience-chamber, and at a signal from within the doors were thrown wide, and they entered.

The room was large but low, and had on each side a row of mullioned windows. It was crowded with company, but a lane was at once made for the earl and George, who advanced towards a dais covered with scarlet cloth at one end of the room, where Governor Dinwiddie stood, in a splendid court-dress; for the governors of Virginia assumed to be viceroys, and everything at the provincial court was copied, as far as possible, from the same thing at the Court of St. James. Ranged round the dais were the wife and daughters of the governor with several ladies-in-waiting, also in court-dresses with trains.

As the earl and George made their reverences they attracted much attention; and when George stood back, silent and awaiting his turn while the governor conversed with the earl, there was a murmur of admiration for him. He was so manly, so graceful, his figure was set off with so incomparable an air of elegance, that other men appeared commonplace beside him. He seemed from his ease and grace to have spent his life at courts, while, in truth, he had never seen anything half so fine before.

The governor, having finished his conversation

with the earl, motioned to George, who advanced as the earl backed off, it being inadmissible to turn one's back on the governor.

The first question asked by Governor Dinwiddie was:

"My Lord Fairfax tells me, Mr. Washington, that you have explored much in the Northwest,"

"I have, your excellency."

"I should very much like at your leisure to have an account of affairs in that region."

"Your excellency may command me."

"And I shall meanwhile have pleasure in presenting you to Madam Dinwiddie, and my daughters Mistress Eleanor and Mistress Katharine."

Madam Dinwiddie, a comely dame, and the two young ladies courtesied low to the handsome young man presented to them, and Madam Dinwiddie said:

"I hope, Mr. Washington, that we may see you at the ball to-night."

"I have promised myself that honor, madam," replied George.

With the earl he then withdrew to the back of the hall, where they found many acquaintances, old to the earl but new to George; and no man or woman who saw George that day but was impressed with him as a youth of whom great things might be expected.

## CHAPTER XVII

VERY splendid was the ball at the palace that night, and very splendid to George's provincial eyes were the assemblies in the great Apollo Room at the Raleigh, where the wits and beaux and belles of the colonial court assembled. Sir John Peyton was not the only dandy to be met with there, although by far the most entertaining. There were many handsome and imposing matrons, but George saw none that his mother could not outshine in dignity and grace; and many beautiful girls, but none more charming than Betty. As communication with his home was easy and frequent, he could write long, descriptive letters to Ferry Farm as well as to Mount Vernon. Betty became so infatuated with George's accounts of the fine people and gay doings at Williamsburg that she wrote George: "I wish, dear George, you would not write me any more about the routs and assemblies at Williamsburg, for your poor sister's head is so full of junkets and capers and the like that

she attends to her duties very ill, and drops stitches in her knitting, which brings her many reproofs, and plays nothing but jigs on the harpsichord, instead of those noble compositions of Mr. Handel, of which our mother is so fond."

George laughed when he read this. He knew, no matter how much Betty's little head might be filled with gayeties, she never forgot to do her whole duty, and had always time for a kind act or an affectionate word to others. But there were more than balls and routs and governor's levees in this visit. George had the opportunity of knowing men prominent in colonial matters — statesmen, scholars, lawyers, men of affairs—and Lord Fairfax, ever on the alert for his favorite's advancement, lost no chance of bringing him to the attention of those in power.

Among the persons they met were many officers of the governor's suite, as well as those attached to the ships at Yorktown. George's passion for a military life had never died, or even languished; but by the exertion of a powerful will he had kept it in abeyance until the times were ripe. Already were Governor Dinwiddie and his council preparing a scheme of defence for the frontier, and Lord Fairfax, with other leading men in the colony, were invited to meet the governor and council to discuss these affairs.

After attending one of these meetings the earl, on coming back to his lodgings, said:

"George, after our conference broke up I talked with the governor concerning you and your future, and he promised me, if the plan is carried out of dividing the colony into districts with an inspector-general with the rank of major for each, that you shall have a commission—that is, if you have not given up your wish for a military life."

As Lord Fairfax spoke a deep red dyed George's face.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "I never have given up, I never can give up, my wish for a military life; and although I did not accept the warrant I was given in the navy, it almost broke my heart. But fighting for my country is another thing; and if the governor calls on me for my services it would certainly be my duty to respond—and I will."

After four delightful weeks in Williamsburg they returned to Mount Vernon; and George, following his plan for two years past, divided his time between Mount Vernon and Ferry Farm until April, when he again started for Greenway Court, where Lord Fairfax had preceded him. Again he started for the frontier with Gist and Davidson, and again he repeated the expe-

riences of the former year almost without the slightest variation. But on his return in September to Greenway Court a melancholy letter from Laurence Washington awaited him. The doctors had declared a sea-voyage the only thing that would restore Laurence's health ; and passage for Barbadoes had been engaged in the *Sprightly Jane*, a commodious merchantman, sailing between Alexandria and the West Indies. Laurence wrote, saying that George must accompany him, otherwise he would not go, to suffer and die, perhaps, among strangers.

Two hours after receiving this letter George was on his way to Mount Vernon. The earl, ever kind, assured him that Gist and Davidson, both highly intelligent men, could give him all the information necessary, together with George's papers, and, furnished with the best horse in the stables at Greenway Court, George set out with a heavy heart. He travelled night and day, and reached Mount Vernon a week before the very earliest that he was expected. His brother's pale and emaciated countenance, his sister's anxiety, cut George to the heart. All the preparations for sailing were made, and the *Sprightly Jane* only waited a fair wind to trip her anchor. George took time to spend one day at Ferry Farm. Madam Washington was a woman of great forti-

tude except in one particular—she trembled at the idea of danger to this best-beloved son; but she made no objection to the voyage, which she saw that George considered not only his duty but his pleasure to make to oblige the best of brothers. But Betty had fortitude even in parting with him. As George rode back through the night to Mount Vernon he could not recall a single instance in connection with himself that Betty had ever once considered herself or her love for him or the solace of his society; always, her first and only thought was for his credit.

"Dear Betty," thought George, as his horse took the road steadily through the darkness, "I believe you would inspire the veriest poltroon that walks with courage to do his duty."

And Betty was so very pretty and winning and coquettish, and had troops of young gentlemen to admire her, at whom George scowled darkly and thought Betty entirely too young for such things. But Betty thought differently, and rated George soundly for his overbearing ways in that respect. For she was not the least afraid of him, and could talk him down with the greatest spirit and emphasis at any time, George being a little in awe of Betty's nimble tongue.

Late in September Laurence Washington, with George and his faithful body-servant Peter,

sailed for Barbadoes. The voyage lasted five weeks, and was very tedious. It did more to cure George of his still smouldering passion for a sea life than he had thought possible. To a young man accustomed to the boundless forests the confinement was irksome. He was used to pursue his plans regardless of weather, and the lying motionless for days in a dead and depressing calm chafed him inexpressibly. Laurence, who bore patiently all the discomforts and delays of their position, could not forbear a wan smile when George, coming down one day to his cabin, burst forth :

"Brother, you were right to prefer the army to the navy for me. At least, let me be where if I walk ten miles I shall be ten miles advanced on my way. I have walked ten miles around this vessel, and I am just where I started."

On a beautiful autumn morning, under a dazzling sun, they landed at Barbadoes. The governor of the island, hearing that the sick gentleman had once been an officer in the British army, immediately called at their temporary lodgings and offered every kindness in his power. He advised Laurence to take a house in the country near the sea, and where the air was good. That afternoon they drove out to the house recom-

mended by the governor, and in a few days were comfortably established there.

At first Laurence improved much. He received every attention, and took pleasure in the society of the officers of the garrison, who found two polished and educated strangers a great resource in their monotonous lives. So anxious was one of them—Colonel Clarke—to have them to dinner that he very unwisely invited them without mentioning that a member of his family was just recovering from the small-pox.

They knew nothing of it until their return home, when both of them were naturally indignant; and George had reason to be, for within nine days he was seized with a well-marked case of the terrible disease. In anticipation of it he had made every arrangement, and, having engaged an old Barbadian negro who had had small-pox for a nurse, he shut himself up to fight the disease.

His powerful constitution triumphed over it, and in three weeks he was well. But never, in all his life, did he forget the sufferings of those dreadful weeks. Utterly unused to illness, he endured agonies of restlessness, and was like a caged lion in his wrath and furious impatience. The old Barbadian, who had nursed many small-pox patients, made him laugh, while in one of his worst moods, by saying, gravely :

"Barbadian nuss small-pox folks forty year. Ain't neber see no patient so bad like Massa Washington."

A fear haunted him that sometimes made him smile grimly, but, nevertheless, gave him some anxious moments. The idea of being horribly disfigured for life was bitter to him. He saw no one but the old Barbadian, and felt afraid to ask him; and as he said nothing about the marks of the disease, there was room to suspect they were bad. George had been able to sit up several days before he dared look in the glass. At last one day, nerving himself, he walked steadily to the mirror and looked at himself, expecting to see a vision of horror. To his amazement and deep relief there was not a single permanent mark. His skin was red, his eyes were hollow and sunken, and he was not by any means the handsome young man who had landed on the island four weeks before, but he was unmarked. He felt a deep thankfulness in his heart when he was thoroughly recovered, though he was distressed to find that his brother grew daily weaker.

Christmas amid waving palmettos and under a tropical sky was dreary to the two brothers, and soon after it became plain that the climate was doing Laurence no good. One night, calling George to him, he said:

"George, I have determined to leave this island, and, with Peter, go to Bermuda. But I am homesick and heartsick for those I love, therefore I have determined to send you back to the colony for your sister Anne, to bring her to me. If I am compelled to be an exile, I will, at least, have the comfort of her society, and I do not think it right, at your age, to keep you forever tied to a sick man's chair."

George answered, with tears in his eyes:

"Whatever you wish, brother, shall be done."

It was found that a vessel was sailing for the Potomac in January, and on her, with a heart heavier than when he came, George embarked the same day that his brother sailed for Bermuda.

Storms, instead of calms, delayed this return voyage, and it was late in February before George reached Mount Vernon. He tried to make the best of Laurence's condition in describing it to his sister, but Mrs. Washington, with a sad smile, stopped him.

"I know all that your kind heart, George, would make you say; but I know, also, that my husband is very, very ill, and when I go to him now it will be never to leave him again."

The *Sprightly Jane* was to make another voyage in March, and it was intended that George

and his sister should sail on her; but she was delayed below Mount Vernon for two weeks, waiting for a wind. One morning late in March, George, looking out of the window on rising to see if there were any chance of getting off that day, felt a strong wind from the northwest; but as soon as his eyes fell on the river he saw a frigate at anchor that had evidently come in during the night. And while watching her he saw the captain's gig shove off with two figures in it that wonderfully resembled his brother Laurence and his faithful Peter. George jumped into his clothes, and ran down-stairs and to the shore to make certain, and there in the boat, half supported by his servant, lay Laurence, pale and ill beyond description, but with a happy light in his weary, suffering eyes. In a few minutes Mrs. Washington came flying down, and, with clasped hands and tears streaming down her cheeks, awaited her husband on the end of the little wharf. The negroes flocked after her, and shouts and cries resounded of, "Howdy, Marse Laurence! Bless de Lord, you done come! Hi! yonder is dat ar' Peter! Lordy, Peter!"

This joyous welcome, the presence of faces dear and familiar, the sight of home, was almost too much happiness for the poor invalid. George

literally carried Laurence in his strong young arms up to the house, while his wife clung to his hand, the old black mammy hung over him, blessing "de Lam'" for letting him return to them, and the negroes yah-yahed with delight.

"I could not stay away any longer," said Laurence, "and when the ship came to Bermuda, and the kind captain saw how hard it was for me to stay, to die among strangers, he invited me to return with him as his guest. I thought that you, Anne, and George might already have started for Bermuda; but, thanks to the good God, I find you here."

All those who loved Laurence Washington saw that day that his end was near, and within three months, with the calmness of the Christian soldier, he gave up his life.

One gloomy September day, just a year from the time he had set forth with his brother on that dreary voyage, George realized that, at last, he was master of Mount Vernon, and the realization was among the most painful moments of his life. He returned to the place from Belvoir, the home of his sister's father, where he had left her. In vain he had pleaded with her to continue at Mount Vernon, for Laurence in his will had given it to her during her lifetime. But,

gentle and submissive in all else, Anne Washington would not and could not return to the home of her brief married happiness and the spot connected with the long series of crushing griefs that had befallen her.

To all of George's pleadings she had answered:

"No, George. Anywhere on earth to me is better than Mount Vernon. I understand what you feel, and have not spoken—that you do not wish to appear to be master while I am living. But you must. I have no fear that you will not give me my share and more of what comes from the estate; but I would give it all up rather than go back. My father's house is the least painful place to me now."

There was no moving her, and at last she was permitted to have her own way.

The servants all crowded around him, and the old mammy, who was promoted to be housekeeper, wanted him to take the rooms that had once been his brother's, but George would not, and had his belongings placed in the little room overlooking the river which had been his from his boyhood. This much disgusted Billy, who thought the master of Mount Vernon quite too modest. He spent the autumn there, varied by occasional visits to Ferry Farm and his sister at Belvoir.

He worked hard, for he regarded himself as merely his sister's steward, and he determined never to make her regret either his brother's or her own generosity to him. He never thought Mount Vernon could be so dreary to him. William Fairfax, who was then graduated from William and Mary College, came over to see him often, but George had not the heart to return even William's visits, so it was all on one side. His mother and Betty came to visit him, but Madam Washington had upon her hands three growing lads, the eldest a tall youth of seventeen, and with the vast cares and responsibilities of the mistress of a plantation in those days she could not be absent for long. The only time in which there was any real brightness was once when Betty came over and stayed a whole month with him. George's affections, like his passions, were rooted in the fibre of his being, and he felt his brother's death with a depth of sorrow that only those who knew him well could understand.

At Christmas he gave all the negroes their usual privileges and presents, but closed the house and went to Ferry Farm. In the holiday time his coming gave the greatest joy, and the cloud upon him began to lift a little.

Meanwhile he had received his commission as major and inspector-general of the forces in his

district from Governor Dinwiddie, and he entered with enthusiasm into his work. He attended the general musters diligently at Alexandria, and used all his influence in promoting enlistments in the militia. He was then nineteen years old—the youngest major in the colonial service.

He was in constant receipt of letters from Lord Fairfax, giving him news of affairs on the frontier, which were assuming a menacing aspect. In one of these letters Lord Fairfax wrote: "The policy of the English has always been to keep on friendly terms with the Six Nations, and the good-will of these great and powerful tribes is essential in the coming conflict. But they have been tampered with by the French, and the great chief lately sent me this message: 'Where are the Indian lands, anyway? For the French claim all on one side of the Ohio and the English claim all on the other.' By which you will see, my dear George, that in diplomacy, as in war, you will find these chiefs no fools. Our honorable governor means well, but I think he will wait until a few men, and perhaps women, are scalped before taking any decisive measures. I need not say I long to see you. Let not another year pass without your coming to Greenway Court."

All during the summer George kept up an active correspondence with the earl, who had special means of finding out the truth. In the early autumn he received a very pressing message from the governor, requiring his presence at Williamsburg. George set off immediately, with Billy, as usual, in charge of his saddle-bags. These sudden journeys, in which George could ride tirelessly night and day, very much disgusted Billy, who, as a man, was quite as fond of his ease as when a boy, but he was obliged to start on short notice.

They arrived at Williamsburg in the evening, and George immediately sent Billy to the palace with a letter notifying the governor of his arrival. In a very little while a letter came back from Governor Dinwiddie, asking Major Washington's presence at the palace at his very earliest convenience.

George had held his commission as major for more than a year, and at twenty-one military titles have a captivating sound. So Major Washington, as soon as he had got his supper, changed his travelling-suit, and, preceded by Billy with a lantern, picked his way through the muddy streets to the palace. The governor was sitting in his closet, as his private room was called in those times, with Colonel Byrd and Colonel Step-

toe, his colonial secretary, when the door opened and Major Washington was announced.

George's appearance, always striking, was more so from the handsome mourning-suit he still wore, although his brother had been dead more than a year. It showed off his blond beauty wonderfully well. His features had become more marked as he grew older, and although his face lacked the regular beauty of his father's, who had been thought the handsomest man of his time, there was a piercing expression, an indescribable look of dignity and intelligence in George's countenance, which marked him in every company.

The governor, who was a fussy but well-meaning man, began, as soon as the formal greetings were over: "Major Washington, I have work in hand for you. I am told by my Lord Fairfax and others that you are the fittest person in the colony for the expedition I have in hand. It requires the discretion of an old man, but it also requires the hardiness and strength of a young man; and you see, therefore, what a burden I lay upon you."

George's face turned quite pale at these words. "Sir," he stammered, "you ask more of me than I can do. I will give all my time and all my mind to my country; but I am afraid, sir—I am

very much afraid—that you are putting me in a position that I am not capable of filling."

"We must trust some one, Major Washington, and I sent not for you until I and my council had fully determined what to do. Here are your instructions. You will see that you are directed to set out with a suitable escort at once for the Ohio River, and convene all the chiefs you can at Logstown. You are to find out exactly how they stand towards us. You are then to take such a route as you think judicious to the nearest French post, deliver a letter from me, sealed with the great seal of the colony, to the French commandant, and demand an answer in the name of his Britannic majesty. You are to find out everything possible in regard to the number of French forts, their armament, troops, commissariat, and where they are situated; and upon the information you bring will depend to a great degree whether there shall be war between England and France. When will you be ready to depart?"

"To-morrow morning, sir," answered George.

## CHAPTER XVIII

The next day, the 31st of October, 1753, George set forth on his arduous mission. He had before him nearly six hundred miles of travelling, much of it through an unbroken wilderness, where snow and ice and rain and hail at that season were to be expected. In the conference with the governor and his advisers, which lasted until after midnight, George had been given *carte blanche* in selecting his escort, which was not to exceed seven persons until he reached Logstown, when he could take as many Indians as he thought wise. He quickly made up his mind as to whom he wanted. He wished first a person of gentle breeding as an interpreter between himself and the French officers. He remembered Captain Jacob Vanbraam, a Dutch officer, now retired, and living at Fredericksburg, who might be induced to make the journey. Then there were Gist and John Davidson. It was thought best, however, to take an Indian along as interpreter for the Indians, as they might complain, in case of a mis-

understanding, that Davidson had fooled them. In regard to the other three persons George concluded that it would be well to wait until he reached Greenway Court, which was directly in the route of his outward journey, as he would be most likely to find in that vicinity a person better used to such an expedition than in the lower country. Armed with full credentials by the governor, and with a belt around his body containing a large sum in gold and negotiable bills, George at daylight took the road he had traversed the night before.

He determined not to take Billy on the expedition, but he rather dreaded the wild howlings and wailings which he thought it was certain Billy would set up when he found he could not go. George therefore thought it well as they trotted along to make Billy ride up with him, and describe all the anticipated hardships of the coming journey. He did not soften one line in the picture, and enlarged particularly upon the scarcity of food, and the chances of starving in the wilderness, or being scalped and roasted by Indians. Billy's countenance during this was a study. Between his devotion to George and his terror of the impending expedition Billy was in torment, and when at last George told him he must remain at either Mount Vernon or Ferry Farm,

Billy did not know whether to howl or to grin.

George reached Fredericksburg that night, and went immediately to Captain Vanbraam's house. The Dutchman, a stout, middle-aged man, yet of a soldierly appearance, at once agreed to go, and, in the few hours necessary for his preparations, George took the opportunity of crossing the river, and spending the night with his mother and sister and brothers at Ferry Farm. His mother was full of fear for him, but she realized that this brave and gifted son was no longer solely hers—his country had need of him as soon as he came of age. Next morning Betty went with him across the river, and bade him good-bye with the smiling lips and tear-filled eyes that always marked her farewells with George, her best beloved. Billy wept vociferously, but was secretly much relieved at being left behind. Four days afterwards George and Captain Vanbraam reached Greenway Court, having sent an express on the way to Gist and Davidson, who lived on the Great North Mountain.

When George burst into Lord Fairfax's library one night about dusk the earl knew not whether to be most delighted or surprised. He immediately began to tell the earl of his forthcoming plan, thanking him at the same time for procuring

him such preferment. "And I assure you, sir," he said, with sparkling eyes, "although at first I felt a strange sinking of the heart, and was appalled at the idea that I was unequal to the task, as soon as the command was laid upon me I felt my spirits rise and my fears disappear. If I succeed I shall be very happy, and if I fail the world will say I was but a boy, after all. Why did his excellency send an inexperienced young man on such an errand? But I shall certainly do my best."

"Angels can do no more," the earl quoted.

George's eagerness and his boyish enthusiasm pleased the earl, who had no taste for solemn youngsters; and he listened, smiling, as George poured forth his hopes, plans, and aspirations. When he spoke of the additional men to be taken, Lord Fairfax said:

"I know of two capable ones. Black Bear would make an excellent Indian interpreter, and Lance would be the very man to note the French fortifications. He has as good a military eye as I ever knew."

George gasped with delight.

"Do you mean, sir," he cried, "that you will really let me have Lance?"

"Go and ask him."

The young major, who had impressed the gov-

ernor and councillors with his gravity and dignity, now jumped up and ran to the armory, bawling "Lance! Lance!" at the top of a pair of powerful lungs. Lance promptly appeared, and in three words George told him the plan. Old Lance nearly wrung George's hand off at the news.

"Well, sir, it makes me feel nigh thirty years younger to be going among the mounseers again. Maybe you think, sir, I never saw a French fort; but I tell you, sir, I have seen more French forts, aye, and been at the taking, too, than they have between here and Canada."

Black Bear was across the mountain, but a messenger was sent at once for him, and he was told to bring another trusty Indian along. Within two days from reaching Greenway Court the party was ready to start. Lord Fairfax saw George set off, in high health and spirits, and full of restrained enthusiasm. He wore the buckskin shirt and leggings of a huntsman to make the journey in, but in his saddle-bags was a fine new major's uniform of the provincial army, and he carried the rapier given him many years before by Lord Fairfax.

Seven days' hard travelling, at the beginning of the wintry season, brought the party to Logstown, not far from what is now Pittsburg. The

journey had been hard, snow having fallen early, and, the fords being swollen, the party were obliged to swim their horses across the mountain streams. But George had not found time heavy on his hands. Captain Vanbraam and Lance discovered that they had served in different campaigns in the same region, and, without forgetting the status between an officer and a private soldier, they were extremely good comrades, much to George's delight.

On their arrival at Logstown, Black Bear at once went in search of his father, the great chief of one of the Six Nations, and the other chiefs were assembled in the course of a day or two. George found them much incensed against the French, but, like all their tribe, before they could act they had to have many meetings and a great oratorical display. George, who loved not speech-making, made them but one brief address, and by using all his powers managed to get Tanacharison and representatives of the other tribes off, and in a few days more they arrived at a French outpost. It was merely a log-house with the French colors flying over it. George, waiting until dusk, and leaving his Indian allies out of sight, taking only with him Vanbraam and Lance, as his servant, rode up to the door and knocked. Three French officers appeared, and,

on seeing two gentlemen in uniform, the senior, Captain Joncaire, civilly asked them, in broken English, to alight and sup with them.

George, with equal politeness, told them that he was the bearer of a letter to M. de St. Pierre, the commandant at the French fort farther up, but would be pleased to accept their hospitality.

Inside the house was quite comfortable, and the party, except Lance, who waited on the table, soon sat down to supper. As George had frankly informed them of his mission, it behooved them to be prudent, and so they were until the wine began to flow. Captain Vanbraam had not thought it his duty to let on that he understood French, and the conversation had been conducted in such English as the French could command. George, although he could not speak French, could understand it a little, especially with the help of the abundant gestures the French used.

He had always had a contempt for men who "put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains," and the spectacle soon presented by the French officers made him swear inwardly that never, so long as he lived, would he put himself in the condition they were in then. These men, brave and otherwise discreet, passed the bottle so often that they soon lost all sense of

prudence, and, turning from broken English to French, told things in regard to their military plans which they would have died rather than betray. Captain Joncaire, forgetting, in his maudlin state, that George had said he did not understand French well, turned to him and said, in French :

"Ah, you English mean to drive us out. Well, let me tell you, we are not to be driven out. We expect to go to war with your country soon, and this is a good place to begin. We know that you can raise two men to our one, but you have a dilatory, foolish governor in Virginia, and he will let us overrun the country before he does anything to stop us."

As he kept on, giving information about his people that he should never have done, and which George partly understood, such keen contempt came into George's eyes that a gleam of soberness returned to Captain Joncaire, and for a few minutes he said no more. But "when the wine is in the wit is out," and the Frenchmen continued to talk in the foolish manner which awaits the wisest man when he makes a beast of himself with liquor.

At ten o'clock George and Captain Vanbraam had to tear themselves away from the Frenchmen, who, drunker than ever, tried to hold them back by embracing them.

As they made their way back to their camp Captain Vanbraam repeated every word the drunken officers had said. George spoke little. The spectacle was not only disgusting but painful to him.

Next morning, early, Captain Joncaire sought out their camp, and professed great surprise at seeing the Indians, whom he declared to be his friends. He invited them to the house, where George well knew there would be liquor and cajolery in plenty for them.

"My dear Major Washington," cried Joncaire, after a while, and coloring slightly as he spoke, "I am afraid you had us at a disadvantage last night. We talked rather wildly, I fancy, but don't put too much confidence in what we said when the wine was flowing."

"I am compelled to put confidence in what Captain Joncaire and his officers say, drunk or sober," was George's reply, delivered not without sarcasm, at which Captain Joncaire winced. The Frenchmen invited the Indians to their post, and George had the mortification of seeing them all carried off, except Tanacharison and his son Black Bear; and when, in the evening, he sent for the chiefs, they returned to him stupidly drunk and loaded with presents from the French.

"We must get them away as soon as possible,"

said George to his white followers and his two faithful Indians. Tanacharison, a venerable old chief and a man of great eloquence, watched the Indians in their drunken sleep, and when they wakened, although it was near sundown, so worked upon them by a speech he made them that they agreed to leave with the rest of the party. George and Captain Vanbraam went to the French post to bid the officers a polite farewell.

Captain Joncaire said many civil things to them, and sent them a handsome present of provisions, but was evidently chagrined at the Indians being carried off under his very nose.

Eleven days more of travelling through intense cold, with the snow deep on the ground, brought the party to Fort Le Bœuf, on French Creek, about fifteen miles from Lake Erie. This was commanded by M. Lagardeur de St. Pierre, an old French officer of great ability, and a chevalier of the military order of St. Louis.

The party reached the fort late in the evening and found it a stout place, well adapted for defence. George rode up to the gate—his horse now a sorry-looking creature—and asked to be conducted to the commandant. As soon as the message was delivered M. de St. Pierre came out in person, and, receiving the letter from the Gov-

ernor of Virginia with great respect, raising his hat in taking it, invited Major Washington's party in.

Although strictly attending to the commandant's conversation, George used his keen eyes to the utmost advantage, and he felt sure that Lance was doing the same thing. There were over a hundred soldiers in the fort, and not less than thirty officers.

George and his party were led through a courtyard, around which were barracks and officers' quarters, protected by bastions well provided with artillery. Arrived at the commandant's quarters, M. de St. Pierre said, courteously, in English:

"When you and your party have refreshed yourselves for a day or two, Major Washington, we will discuss the matters contained in the governor's letter."

Now this was just what George did not desire. He knew that every artifice would be practised on his Indian allies to win them to the French, as Captain Joncaire had done, with much greater prospect of success. How would he persuade them to leave the good food, the seductive liquor, and the presents that he felt sure the French were ready to shower upon them? His only dependence was upon Tanacharison and

Black Bear. How often did he rejoice inwardly over that bucket of water he had given Black Bear the night of the attack at Greenway Court, six years before! His reply, therefore, to the French commandant was polite but positive:

"I thank you, sir, for your kindness, but I am ready, at this moment, to proceed to the consideration of his excellency's letter."

This slightly disconcerted M. de St. Pierre, who had some inward contempt for the youth of the ambassador sent by the governor.

"I shall have to send for my second in command, Captain Reparti," he said, "who left us this morning to visit another post."

"I hope, monsieur, that you will send for him at your earliest convenience, for my orders are peremptory—to deliver the letter and return with an answer at the earliest possible moment."

"If I send this evening," remarked M. de St. Pierre, "my messenger might lose his way in the darkness."

"If you will kindly give me the directions, sir," answered George, with much politeness, "I have men in my party who can make the journey by night, although they have never traversed this part of the country before."

"I will send, however, immediately," said M. de St. Pierre, coloring slightly, and comprehend-

ing that he was dealing with a natural diplomatist.

After a very agreeable dinner George was shown to his room, where Lance, as his servant, awaited him. Scarcely was the door closed before George began, anxiously:

"Where are the Indians?"

"In the barrack-room, sir. The French soldiers are promising them guns and powder and shot and hatchets, and pouring liquor down all of them except Tanacharison and Black Bear, who won't drink, and who mean to be true to us. But, sir, you can't blame the poor devils for taking what the French give them."

"We must get away from here as soon as possible," cried George. "What have you noticed in the fort, Lance?"

"That it's mighty well made, sir; the mounseers are fine engineers, and they know how to build a fort. They have eight six-pounders mounted in the bastions, and a four-pounder at the gate-house. But they have got a lot more places pierced for guns, and you may depend upon it, sir, they have a-plenty more guns than they choose to show stowed away somewhere."

Next morning, Captain Reparti having arrived, M. de St. Pierre and his officers considered the governor's letter privately, and then, admitting

George, with his interpreter, Captain Vanbraam, an answer was dictated denying the right of the English to any part of the country watered by the Ohio River. This was an important and dangerous announcement, and, although not a word was said about war, yet every man present knew that if this contention were maintained England and France must fight, and the country must be drenched with blood. George, with perfect composure, received the letter, and, rising, said:

"My mission, sir, is accomplished. I have delivered the governor's letter, and your reply, M. de St. Pierre, shall be conveyed not only to the governor but to his Britannic majesty. I am now ready to take my leave."

"Do not be in so great a hurry to leave us, Major Washington," said M. de St. Pierre, suavely. "Some of my young officers promised a few guns to your Indian allies, by way of making them satisfied to remain during our negotiation, which I thought would be longer, and the guns cannot arrive until to-morrow morning."

As George knew the impossibility of getting the Indians off without the guns, he consented with the utmost readiness to remain; but he would have given half his fortune to have got off.

The day was one of intense nervous strain on

him. His sole dependence in managing the Indians were Tanacharison and Black Bear. And what if they should betray him? But at night the old chief and his son came to him and promised most solemnly to get the chiefs away as soon as the guns should arrive in the morning. George had a luxurious bed in his rude though comfortable quarters, but he slept not one wink that night. By daylight he was up. Soon after Lance sidled up to him in the courtyard, and said:

"Sir, the guns have come—I saw them myself; but the Frenchies will not say a word about it unless they are asked."

Just then M. de St. Pierre, wrapped in a great surtout, appeared, coming out of his quarters.

"Good-morning, Major Washington!" he cried.

"Good-morning, M. de St. Pierre!" replied George, gayly. "I must give orders to my party for an early start, as the guns you promised the Indians have arrived, and I have no further excuse for remaining."

"Sacre bleu!" burst out M. de St. Pierre; "I did not expect the guns so soon!" At which he looked into George's eyes, and suddenly both burst out laughing. The Frenchman saw that his *ruse* was understood.

The party was soon collected, and after a

hearty breakfast George took his leave, and, much to the chagrin of the French, succeeded in carrying off all his Indian allies with him. They rapidly retraced their road, and when they made their first halt, ten miles from Fort Le Bœuf, George exclaimed, aside to Lance:

"This is the first easy moment I have known for twenty-four hours!"

"'Tis the first I have had, sir, since we got to the first post, fourteen days ago!"

It was now the latter part of December. The horses, gaunt and starved, were no longer fit for riding, and George set the example of dismounting and going on foot. Their progress with so large a party was not rapid, and George determined to leave Captain Vanbraam, with the horses and provisions, to follow, while he, in his health and strength, set off at a more rapid gait, in order that he might reach Williamsburg with M. de St. Pierre's defiant letter as soon as possible. Lance, with his experience as a foot-soldier, easily proved his superiority when they were reduced to walking, so George chose him as a companion. Christmas Day was spent in a long, hard march, and on the next day George, dressing himself in his buckskin shirt and leggings, with his gun and valuable papers, and giving most of the money for the expedition to Captain

Vanbraam, struck off with Lance for a more rapid progress.

The two walked steadily all day, and covered almost twice as much ground as the party following them. At night with their flints they struck a roaring fire in the forest, and took turns in watching and sleeping. By daylight they were again afoot.

"I never saw such a good pair of legs as you have, sir, in all my life," said Lance, on this day, as they trudged along. "My regiment was counted to have the best legs for steady work in all the Duke of Marlborough's army, and mine were considered the best pair in the regiment, but you put me to my trumps."

"Perhaps if you were as young as I you would put me to *my* trumps, for—"

At this moment a shot rang out in the frozen air, and a bullet made a clean hole through George's buckskin cap. One glance showed him an Indian crouching in the brushwood. With a spring as quick and sure as a panther's, George had the savage by the throat, and wrenched the firelock, still smoking, from his hand. Behind him half a dozen Indian figures were seen stealing off through the trees. Lance walked up, and, raising a hatchet over the Indian's head, said, coolly:

"GEORGE HAD THE SAVAGE BY THE THROAT"

"Mr. Washington, we must kill him as we would a rattlesnake."

"No," replied George, "I will not have him killed." *

The Indian, standing perfectly erect and apparently unconcerned, understood well enough that the question of his life or death was under discussion, but with a more than Roman fortitude he awaited his fate, glancing indifferently meanwhile at the glittering edge of the hatchet still held over him.

George took the hatchet from Lance's hand, and said to the Indian, in English:

"Though you have tried to kill me, I will spare your life. But I will not trust you behind me. Walk ten paces in front of us in the direction of the Alleghany River."

* Washington, in his journal, speaks of the Indian firing at him at short range, but says nothing of his preventing his companion from killing the would-be murderer. But his companion expressly says that he would have killed the Indian on the spot had not Washington forbidden him. The Indians became very superstitious about Washington's immunity from bullets, especially after Braddock's defeat. In that battle he was the target for the best marksmen among them, and not only escaped without a scratch, although two horses were killed under him and his clothes riddled with bullets, but he was the only officer of Braddock's military family who survived.

The Indian turned, and, after getting his bearings, started off in a manner which showed he understood what was required of him.

The Indians have keen ears, so that George and Lance dared not speak in his hearing, but by exchanging signs they conveyed to each other that there were enemies on their path, of whom this fellow was only one.

Steadily the three tramped for hours, Lance carrying the Indian's gun. When darkness came on they stopped and made the Indian make the fire, which he did, scowling, as being squaw's work. They then divided with him their scanty ration of dried venison, and George, taking charge of the guns, Lance slept two hours. He was then wakened by George, who lay down by the fire and slept two hours, when he too was wakened. George then said to the Indian, who had remained sleepless and upright all the time:

"We have determined to let you go, as we have not food enough for three men. Go back to your tribe, and tell them that we spared your life; but before you go pile wood on the fire, for we may have to remain here, on account of the rise in the river, for several days."

This was a *ruse*, but the Indian fell at once into the trap. After replenishing the fire he started off in a northwesterly direction. As

soon as George and Lance were sure that he was out of sight they made off in the opposite direction, and after some hours of trudging through snow and ice they found themselves on the bank of the river. They had hoped to find it frozen over, but, instead, there was only a fringe of ice-cakes along the shores and swirling about in the main channel.

Lance looked at George in some discouragement, but George only said, cheerfully:

"It is lucky you have the hatchet, Lance. We must make a raft."

The short winter day was nearly done before a rude raft was made, and on it the two embarked. The piercing wind dashed their frail contrivance about, and it was buffeted by the floating ice. The Indian's gun was lost, but their powder, in an oilskin knapsack, which George carried on his back, escaped wetting, although he himself, as well as Lance, was drenched to the skin. They could not make the opposite shore, but were forced to land on an island, where they spent the night. The hardships told on the older man, and George saw, by the despairing look in Lance's eyes, that he could do no more that day. Wood, however, was plentiful, and a great fire was made.

"Cheer up, Lance!" cried George, when the

fire began to blaze; "there is still some dried venison left. You shall sleep to-night, and in the morning the river will be frozen over, and one more day's march will bring us to civilization."

Lance was deeply mortified at his temporary collapse, but there was no denying it. George had no sleep that night, except about two hours after midnight, when Lance roused of himself. By daylight they were astir, and crossed the river on the ice. Five days afterwards, at a fork in the road twenty miles from Greenway Court, the two parted—Lance to return to Greenway Court, and George to press on to Williamsburg. By that time they had secured horses.

"Good-bye, my friend," said George. "Tell my lord that nothing but the urgency of the case prevented me from giving myself the happiness of seeing him, and that no day has passed since he sent you with me that I have not thanked him in my heart for your company."

A subtile quiver came upon Lance's rugged face.

"Mr. Washington," he said, "I thank you humbly for what you have said; but mark my words, sir, the time will come, if it is not already here, that my lord will be thankful for every hour that you have spent with him, and proud

for every step of advancement he has helped you to."

"I hope so, my friend," cried George, gayly, and turning to go.

Lance watched the tall, lithe young figure in hunting-clothes, worn and torn, riding jauntily off, until George was out of sight. Then he himself struck out for Greenway Court. Four days afterwards a tattered figure rode up to Mount Vernon. The negroes laughed and cried and yah-yahed at seeing "Marse George" in such a plight. Spending only one night there, in order to get some clothes and necessaries, he left at daybreak for Williamsburg, where he arrived and reported to the governor exactly eleven weeks from the day he started on this terrible journey.

## CHAPTER XIX

The news brought by George confirmed all the fears of the war which was presently to begin and to last for seven years. The governor immediately called together his council, laid before them Major Washington's report, and for once acted with promptitude. It was determined to raise a force of several hundred men, to take possession of the disputed territory, and, without a single opposing voice, the command was offered to Major Washington, with the additional rank of lieutenant-colonel.

George said little, but his gratification was deeper than he could express. He wrote to his mother at once, and also to Betty, and Betty answered: "Our mother is very resigned, for she knows, dear George, that when one has a son or a brother who is *a great military genius*, and who everybody knows must one day be *a great man*, one must give him up to his country." At which George laughed very much, for he did not think himself either a genius or a great man.

After receiving the governor's instructions, and paying a flying visit to Ferry Farm, George went to Mount Vernon, as all the preparations for the campaign were to be made at Alexandria, which was the rendezvous.

His days were now spent in the most arduous labor. He knew what was before him, and he was full of care. He was very anxious to enlist men from the mountain districts, as being better able to withstand the hardships of a mountain campaign. He wrote to Lord Fairfax, who was lieutenant of the county of Frederick, and a recruiting station was opened at Greenway Court. At last, in April, he was ready to march on his first campaign. His force consisted of about four hundred Virginia troops, with nine swivels mounted on carriages. He expected to be joined by other troops from Maryland and Pennsylvania, but he was doomed to be cruelly disappointed. The morning of the 15th of April, 1754, was bright and warm, and at eight o'clock the soldiers marched out, to the music of the fife and drum, from the town of Alexandria, with Colonel Washington at their head.

They were a fine-looking body of men, but, as always, Colonel Washington was the finest figure present. He rode a superb chestnut horse, handsomely caparisoned. In his splendid new uniform

his elegant figure showed to the greatest advantage. All the windows of the streets through which they marched were filled with spectators. At one Colonel Washington removed his chapeau, and bowed as if to royalty, for from it his mother and Betty were watching him. His mother raised her hands in blessing, while Betty held out her arms as if to clasp him. And when he had passed the two fond creatures fell into each other's arms, and cried together very heartily.

Captain Vanbraam commanded the first company. In one of the baggage-wagons sat a familiar figure. It was Billy—not left behind this time, but taken as George's body-servant.

On the 20th Will's Creek was reached. A small party of men under Captain Trench had been sent forward by the governor to the Ohio River, with orders to build a fort at what is now Pittsburg, and there await Colonel Washington. But while the Virginia troops were marching through the forest, before sighting the creek, an officer on a horse was seen approaching. He rode up to George, and, saluting, said:

"I am Ensign Ward, sir, of Captain Trench's company."

"From the fort at the meeting of the Alleghany and Monongahela?" asked George.

"Ah, sir," cried the young officer, with tears

in his eyes, "the fort is no longer ours. A French force, consisting of nearly a thousand men, appeared while we were at work on it, and opened fire on us. We were but forty-one, and we were forced to hoist the white flag without firing a shot."

This was, indeed, dreadful news. It showed that the French were fully alive to the situation, if not beforehand with the English. Even a small detachment of the French force could cut off and destroy this little band of four companies. George's mind was hard at work while young Ward gave the details of the surrender. His only comment was:

"We must push on to a point I have marked on the Monongahela, and there build the fort instead of at the junction of the rivers."

After passing Will's Creek they were in the heart of the wilderness. The transportation of the guns, ammunition, and baggage was so difficult, owing to the wildness of the country, that they were fourteen days in making fourteen miles. But the men, animated by their commander, toiled uncomplainingly at work most distasteful to soldiers—cutting down trees, making bridges, and dragging the guns over rocks when wheels could not turn. Even Billy worked for the first time in his life. One night, after

three weeks of this labor, an Indian stalked up to the camp and demanded to see the commander. George happened to be passing on his nightly round of inspection, and in a moment recognized his old friend Tanacharison. "Welcome!" cried the chief in the Indian tongue, and calling George by his Indian name of "Young White Warrior."

"Welcome to you," answered George, more than pleased to see his ally.

"This is no time for much talk," said the Indian. "Fifty French soldiers with Captain Jumonville are concealed in a glen six miles away. They are spies for the main body — for the French have three men to your one—and if they find you here you will be cut to pieces. But if you can catch the French spies, the main body will not know where you are; and," he added, with a crafty smile, "if they should meet Tanacharison, he will send them a hundred miles in the wrong direction."

George saw in a moment the excellence of the old chief's advice. Tanacharison knew the road, which was comparatively easy, and offered to guide them, and to assist with several of his braves. It was then nine o'clock, and rain had begun falling in torrents. George retired to his rude shelter of boughs, called together his officers, and announced his intention of attacking this party

of fifty Frenchmen. He made a list of forty picked men, and at midnight he caused them to be wakened quietly, and set off without arousing the whole camp.

The wind roared and the rain changed to hail, but still the Virginians, with Washington at their head, kept on through the woods. Sometimes they sank up to their knees in quagmires —again they cut their feet against sharp stones; but they never halted. At daybreak they entered the glen in two files, the Indians on one side, the Virginians on the other, George leading. It was a wild place, surrounded by rocks, with only one narrow cleft for entrance. Just as the last man had entered the alarm was given, and firing began from both parties at the same time. The French resisted bravely, headed by Captain Jumonville, who was the first man to fall; but a quarter of an hour's sharp fighting decided the skirmish, and the French called for quarter. This was George's baptism of fire, and it was the beginning of war between France and England, which was to last, with but a few years' intermission, for more than fifty years.

The prisoners were at once taken back to the American camp, and then sent, under guard, back to Virginia. This little success raised the spirits of the troops very much, but George, with

a prophetic eye, knew that, as soon as the story of Jumonville's defeat and death reached the French, a formidable force would be sent out against him. He had brave and active spies, who penetrated almost as far as Fort Duquesne, as the French had named Trench's fort, but none of them equalled old Tanacharison. One night, the last of June, he and three other scouts brought the news that the French were advancing, nine hundred strong, and were near at hand. A council of war was called, and it was determined to retreat to Great Meadows, where a better stand could be made, and where it was thought provisions and reinforcements would meet them. Accordingly, at daybreak, a start was made. The horses had become so weak from insufficient food that they could no longer drag the light swivels, and the men were forced to haul them. George himself set the example of the officers walking, and, dismounting, loaded his horse with public stores, while he engaged the men, for liberal pay, to carry his own small baggage. It very much disgusted Billy to be thrown out of his comfortable seat in the baggage-wagon, but he was forced to leg it like his betters.

Two days' slow and painful marching brought them to Great Meadows, but, to their intense

disappointment, not a man was found, nor provisions of any sort. The men were disheartened but unmurmuring.

George immediately set them to work felling trees and making such breastworks of earth and rocks as they could manage with their few tools.

"I shall call this place Fort Necessity," he said to his officers; "for it is necessity, not choice, that made me retreat here."

Every hour in the day and night he expected to be attacked, but no attack would have caught him unprepared to resist as best he could with his feeble force. His ceaseless vigilance surprised even those who knew how tireless he was.

At last, on the morning of the 3d of July, just as George had finished making the round of the sentries, he heard, across the camp, a shot, followed by the sudden shriek of a wounded man. The French skirmishers were on the ground, and one of them, being seen stealing along in the underbrush, had been challenged by the sentry, and had fired in reply and winged his man. The alarm was given, and by nine o'clock it was known that a French force of nine hundred men, with artillery, was approaching rapidly. By eleven o'clock the gleam of their muskets could be seen through the trees as they advanced to the attack. Meanwhile not a mo-

ment since the first alarm had been lost in the American camp. George seemed to be everywhere at once, animating his men, and seeing that every possible preparation was made. He had posted his little force in the best possible manner, and had instructed his officers to fight where they were, and not to be drawn from their position into the woods, where the French could slaughter them at will.

The French began their fire at six hundred yards, but the Americans did not return a shot until the enemy was within range, when George, himself sighting a swivel, sent a shot screeching into the midst of them. He fully expected an assault, but the French were wary, and, knowing their superiority in force, as well as the longer range of their artillery, withdrew farther into the woods, and began to play their guns on the Americans, who could not fire an effective shot. The French sharp-shooters, too, posting themselves behind trees, picked off the Americans, and especially aimed at the horses, which they destroyed one by one. All during the hot July day this continued. The Americans showed an admirable spirit, and this young commander, with the fortitude of a veteran, encouraged them to resist, but he was too good a soldier not to see that there could be but one issue to it. At every

volley from the French some of the Americans dropped, and this going on, hour after hour, under a burning sun, by weary, half-starved men, would have tried the courage of the best soldiers in the world. But the men and their young commander were animated by the same spirit —they must stubbornly defend every inch of ground and die in the last ditch.

Captain Vanbraam, who was second in command, was a man of much coolness, and knew the smell of burning powder well. During the day, standing near him, he said quietly to George:

"I see, Colonel Washington, that you practice the tactics of all great soldiers: if you cannot win, you will at least make the enemy pay dearly for his victory." George turned a pale but determined face upon him.

"I must never let the Frenchman think that Americans are easily beaten. They outnumber us three to one, but we must fight for honor when we can no longer fight for victory. Nor can I acknowledge myself beaten before the Frenchman thinks so, and he must sound the parley first. The braver our defence the better will be the terms offered us."

Captain Vanbraam gazed with admiration at the commanding officer of twenty-three—so cool, so determined in the face of certain disaster.

George in all his life had never seen so many dead and wounded as on that July day, but he bore the sight unflinchingly.

About sunset on this terrible day a furious thunder-storm arose. Within ten minutes the sky, that had gleamed all day like a dome of heated brass, grew black. The clouds rushed from all points of the compass, and formed a dense black pall overhead. It seemed to touch the very tops of the tall pines, that rocked and swayed fearfully, as a wind, fierce and sudden, swept through them. A crash of thunder, like two worlds coming together, followed a flash of lightning which rent the heavens. As tree after tree was struck in the forest and came down the sharp crash was heard. Then the heavens were opened and floods descended. At the beginning of the tempest George had promptly ordered the men to withdraw, with the wounded, inside the rude fort. He worked alongside with the private soldiers in trying to make the wounded men more comfortable, and lifted many of them with his own arms into the best protected spots. It was impossible to secure them from the rain, however, or to keep the powder dry, and George saw, with an anguish that nearly broke his heart, that he had fired his last shot.

For two hours the storm raged, and then died

away as suddenly as it rose. A pallid moon came out in the heavens, and a solemn and awful silence succeeded the uproar of tempest and battle. About nine o'clock, by the dim light of a few lanterns, the Americans saw a party approaching bearing a white flag, and with a drummer beating the parley. George, who was the first to see them, turned to Captain Vanbraam.

"You will meet them, captain, but by no means allow them to enter the fort so they can see our desperate situation."

Captain Vanbraam, accompanied by two other officers, met the Frenchmen outside the breastworks, where they received a letter from the French commander to Colonel Washington. George read it by the light of a pine torch which Captain Vanbraam held for him. It ran:

"SIR,—Desirous to avoid the useless effusion of blood, and to save the lives of gallant enemies like yourself and the men under your command, I propose a parley to arrange the terms of surrender of your forces to me as the representative of his most Christian majesty. Captain Du Val, the bearer of this, is empowered to make terms with you or your representative, according to conditions which I have given him in writing, of which the first is that your command be permitted to march out with all the honors of war, drums beating and colors flying. I have the honor to be, sir, with the highest respect,

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"DUCHAINE."

As George finished reading this letter for one moment his calmness deserted him, and with a groan he covered his face with his hands. But it was only for a moment; the next he had recovered a manly composure. With a drum-head for a table, and a log of wood for a seat, he called his officers about him, and quietly discussed the proposed terms, Captain Vanbraam translating to those who did not understand French. The conditions were highly honorable. The Frenchman knew what he was about, and the stubborn resistance of the Americans had earned them, not only the respect, but the substantial consideration of the French. They were to be paroled on delivering up their prisoners, and were to retain their side-arms and baggage.

The men knew what was going on, as orders had been given to cease firing, and having built camp-fires, sat about them, gloomy and despondent. But no word of murmuring escaped them. When at last, in about an hour, the preliminaries were arranged, signed, and sent to the French commander, George assembled round him the remnant of men left.

"My men," he said, in a choked voice, "to-morrow morning at nine o'clock we shall march out of Fort Necessity beaten but not disgraced. Every man here has done his whole duty, but we

"WITH DRUMS BEATING AND COLORS FLYING."

were outnumbered three to one; and our fight this day has been for our honor, not for victory, because victory was impossible. We are accorded all the honors of war, which shows that we are fighting men as honorable as ourselves. I thank you every one, officers and soldiers, for the manly defence you have made. This is our first fight, but it is not our last, and the time will come, I hope, when we can wipe out this day's record by a victory gained not by superior force but by superior gallantry."

A cheer broke from the men who had listened to him. They were soldiers, and they knew that they had been well commanded, and that the unequal battle had been very nobly fought, and George Washington was one of the few men in the world's history who could always command in defeat the confidence that other men can only secure in success.

Next morning—by a strange coincidence the Fourth of July, then an unmarked day in the calendar—at nine o'clock the Americans marched out of camp. The French were drawn up in parallel lines in front of the intrenchment. Knowing that the American officers would be afoot, the French officers sent their horses to the rear. As the Americans marched out, with George Washington at their head, the French com-

mander, Duchaine, turned to his officers and said, smiling:

"Look at that beautiful boy-commander! Are not such provincials worth conquering?"

The Americans halted, and George advanced to thank the French commander for the extreme courtesy shown the Americans, for it was the policy of the French to conciliate the Americans, and to profess to think them driven into the war by England.

Before George could speak the Frenchman, saluting, said:

"Colonel Washington, I had heard that you were young, but not until this moment did I fully realize it. All day yesterday I thought I was fighting a man as old in war as I am, and I have been a soldier for more than thirty years."

George could only say a few words in reply, but to the core of his heart he felt the cordial respect given him by his enemies.

But his thoughts were bitter on that homeward march. He had been sent out to do great things, and he came back a defeated man. By the watch-fires at night he prepared his account to be submitted to Governor Dinwiddie, and it was the most painful work of his life. After two weeks' travel, the latter part of it in advance of

his command, he reached Williamsburg. The House of Burgesses was in session, and this gave him a painful kind of satisfaction. He would know at once what was thought of his conduct.

On the day of his arrival he presented himself before Governor Dinwiddie, who received him kindly.

"We know, Colonel Washington," he said, "that you surrendered three hundred men to nine hundred. But we also know that you gave them a tussle for it. Remain here until I have communicated with the House of Burgesses, when you will, no doubt, be sent for."

George remained in his rooms at the Raleigh Tavern, seeing no one. He knew the governor perfectly well—a man of good heart but weak head—and he set more value on the verdict of his own countrymen, assembled as burgesses, than on the governor's approval. He did not have to wait long. The House of Burgesses received his report, read it, and expressed a high sense of Colonel Washington's courage and ability, although, in spite of both, he had been unfortunate, and declared a continuation of their confidence in him. Not so Governor Dinwiddie. His heart was right, but whenever he thought for himself he always thought wrong. The fact that he

had to report to the home government the failure of this inadequate expedition set him to contriving, as all weak men will, some one or some circumstance on which to shift the responsibility. It occurred to him at once: the Virginia troops were only provincial troops—Colonel Washington was a provincial officer. What was needed, this wise governor concluded, was regular troops and regular officers. This he urged strongly in his report to the home government, and next day he sent for George.

"Colonel Washington," he said, suddenly, "I believe nothing can be accomplished without the aid of regular troops from England, and I have asked for at least two regiments for the next campaign. Meanwhile I have determined to raise ten companies to assist the regular force which is promised us in the spring, for it is now too late in the season for military operations. I offer you the command of one of those companies. Your former officers will be similarly provided for; but I will state frankly that when the campaign opens the officers of the same rank in his majesty's regular troops will outrank those in the provincial army."

George listened to this remarkable speech with the red slowly mounting into his face. His temper, brought under control only by the most

determined will, showed in his eyes, which literally blazed with anger.

"Sir," he said, after a moment, "as I understand, you offer me a captain's commission in exchange for that which I now bear of lieutenant-colonel, and I am to be made the equal of men whom I have commanded, and all of us are to be outranked by the regular force."

The governor shifted uneasily in his chair, and finally began a long rigmarole which he meant for an explanation. George heard him through in an unbroken silence, which very much disconcerted the governor. Then he rose and said, with a low bow:

"Sir, I decline to accept the commission you offer me, and I think you must suppose me as empty as the commission itself in proposing it. I shall also have the honor of surrendering to your excellency the commission of lieutenant-colonel, which you gave me; and I bid you, sir, good-morning"—and he was gone.

The governor looked about him, dazed at finding himself so suddenly alone.

"What a young fire-eater!" he soliloquized. "But it is the way with these republicans. They fancy themselves quite as good as anybody the king can send over here, and the spirit

shown by this young game-cock is just what I might have expected of him."

The governor tried to dismiss the subject from his mind, but he could not, and he soon found out that "the young game-cock's" spurs were fully grown.

## CHAPTER XX

George returned to Alexandria, where his regiment awaited him. He was mad with rage and chagrin. He could have taken censure with humility, feeling sure that whatever mistakes he had made were those of inexperience, not a want of zeal or courage. But to be quietly supplanted, to be asked—after all the hardships and dangers he had passed through, and the exoneration from blame by his countrymen—to take a humiliating place, was more than he felt he ought to bear.

When he reached Alexandria he informed his officers of the resignation of his commission, which would be accepted in a few days; and their reply was an address, which did what all his cares and griefs and hardships had never done—it brought him to tears. A part of the letter ran thus:

"Sir,—We, your most obedient and affectionate officers, beg leave to express our great concern at the disagreeable news we have received of your determination to resign the

command of that corps in which we have, under you, long served. The happiness we have enjoyed and the honor we have acquired, together with the mutual regard that has always subsisted between you and your officers, have implanted so sensible an affection in the minds of us all that we cannot be silent on this critical occasion.

"Your steady adherence to impartial justice, your quick discernment and invariable regard to merit, first heightened our natural emulation to excel. Judge, then, how sensibly we must be affected with the loss of such an excellent commander, such a sincere friend, such an affable companion. How great the loss of such a man! It gives us additional sorrow, when we reflect, to find our unhappy country will receive a loss no less irreparable than our own. Where will it find a man so experienced in military affairs—one so renowned for patriotism, conduct, and courage? Who has so great a knowledge of the enemy we have to deal with? Who so well acquainted with their situation and strength? Who so much respected by the soldiery? Who, in short, so well able to support the military character of Virginia? We presume to entreat you to lead us on to assist in the glorious work of extirpating our enemies. In you we place the most implicit confidence. Your presence only will cause a steady firmness and vigor to actuate in every breast, despising the greatest dangers, and thinking light of toils and hardships, while led on by the man we know and love."*

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*This letter, which is printed in full in Marshall's *Life of Washington*, was among the highest *personal* compliments ever paid Washington. The signers were seasoned soldiers, addressing a young man of twenty-three, under whom they had made a campaign of frightful hardship ending in disaster. They were to be ordered to resume operations in the spring, and it was to this young man that these officers ap-

Deep, indeed, was the conviction which made George resist this letter; but his reply was characteristic: "I made not this decision lightly, and all I ask is that I may be enabled to go with you in an honorable capacity; but to be degraded and superseded, this I cannot bear."

The governor was very soon made aware that the soldiers bitterly resented his treatment of their young commander, but he had gone too far to retreat. George, as soon as his resignation was accepted, retired to Mount Vernon; and about the time he left his regiment at Alexandria two frigates sailed up the Potomac with General Braddock and landed two thousand regular troops for the spring campaign against the French and Indians.

George spent the autumn and winter at Mount Vernon, where, until then, he had spent but one night in fifteen months. After getting his affairs there in some sort of order he visited his sister at Belvoir, and his mother and Betty at Ferry Farm. All of them noticed a change in him. He had grown more grave, and there was a singular gentleness in his manner. His quick temper seemed to have been utterly subdued. Betty alone spoke to him of the change she saw.

pealed, believing him to be essential to the proper conduct of the campaign.

"I think, dear Betty," he answered, gently, "that no one can go through a campaign such as I have seen without being changed and softened by it. And then I foresee a terrible war with France and discord with the mother-country. We are upon the threshold of great events, depend upon it, of which no man can see the outcome."

The winter was passed in hard work at Mount Vernon. Only by ceaseless labor could George control his restlessness. The military fever was kindled in his veins, and, do what he could, there was no subduing it, although he controlled it. Torn between the desire to serve his country as a military man and the sense of a personal and undeserved affront, he scarcely knew what to do. One day, in the fever of his impatience, he would determine to go to Alexandria and enlist as a private in his old corps. Then reason and reflection, which were never long absent from him, would return, and he would realize that his presence under such circumstances would seriously impair the discipline of the corps. And after receiving the officers' letter, and hearing what was said and done among them, he was forced to recognize, in spite of his native modesty, that his old troops would not tolerate that he should be in any position which they con-

ceived inadequate to his deserts. Captain Vanbraam told him much of this one night when he rode from Alexandria to spend the night with George.

"General Braddock is a great, bluff, brave, foolish, hard-drinking, hard-riding Irishman. He does not understand the temper of our soldiers, and has not the remotest conception of Indian fighting, which our enemies have been clever enough to adopt. I foresee nothing but disaster if he carries out the campaign on his present lines. There is but one good sign. He has heard of you, Colonel Washington, and seems to have been impressed by the devotion of your men to you. Last night he said to me, 'Can you not contrive to get this young colonel over to see me? I observe one strange thing in these provincial troops: they have exactly the same confidence in Colonel Washington now as before his disastrous campaign, and as a soldier I know there must be some great qualities in a commander when even defeat cannot undo him with his men, for your private soldier is commonly a good military critic; so now, my little Dutch captain,' bringing his great fist down on my back like the hammer on the anvil, 'do you bring him to see me. If he will take a place in my military family, by gad it is his.' And, my young

colonel," added Vanbraam in his quiet way, "I am not so sure it is not your duty to go, for I have a suspicion that this great swashbuckler will bring our troops to such a pass in this campaign that only you can manage them. So return with me to-morrow."

"Let me sleep on it," answered George, with a faint smile.

Next evening, as the general sat in his quarters at the Alexandria Tavern, surrounded by his officers, most of them drinking and swaggering, the general most of all, a knock came at the door, and when it was opened Captain Vanbraam's short figure appeared, and with him George Washington, the finest and most military figure that General Braddock ever remembered to have seen. Something he had once heard of the great Condé came to General Braddock's dull brain when he saw this superb young soldier: "This man was born a captain."

When George was introduced he was received with every evidence of respect. The general, who was a good soldier after a bad pattern, said to him at once:

"Mr. Washington, I have much desired to see you, and will you oblige me by giving me, later on, a full account of your last campaign?" The other officers took the hint, and, in a little while,

George and the general were alone. They remained alone until two o'clock in the morning, and when George came out of the room he had entered as a private citizen he was first aide-de-camp on General Braddock's staff.

As he walked back to Captain Vanbraam's quarters in the dead of night, under a wintry sky, he was almost overwhelmed with conflicting feelings. He was full of joy that he could make the campaign in an honorable position; but General Braddock's utter inability to comprehend what was necessary in such fighting filled him with dread for the brave men who were to be risked in such a venture.

Captain Vanbraam was up waiting for him. In a few words George told what had passed.

"And now," he said, "I must be up and doing, although it is past two o'clock. I must bid my mother good-bye, and I foresee there will be no time to do it when once I have reported, which I promised to do within twenty-four hours. By starting now I can reach Ferry Farm to-morrow morning, spend an hour with her, and return here at night; so if you, captain, will have my horses brought, I will wake up my boy Billy"—for, although Billy was quite George's age, he remained ever his "boy."

Next morning at Ferry Farm, about ten

o'clock, Betty, happening to open the parlor door, ran directly into George's arms, whom she supposed to be forty-five miles off. Betty was speechless with amazement.

"Don't look as if you had seen a rattlesnake, Betty," cried George, giving her a very cruel pinch, "but run, like a good child as you are, though flighty, and tell our mother that I am here."

Before Betty could move a step in marched Madam Washington, stately and beautiful as ever. And there were the three boys, all handsome youths, but handsomer when they were not contrasted with the elder brother; and then, quite gayly and as if he were a mere lad, George plunged into his story, telling his mother that he was to make the campaign with General Braddock as first aide-de-camp, and trying to tell her about the officers' letter, which he took from his pocket, but, blushing very much, was going to return it, had not Betty seized it as with an eagle's claw.

"Betty," cried George, stamping his foot, "give me back that letter!"

"No, indeed, George," answered Betty, with calm disdain. "Do not put on any of your grand airs with me. I have heard of this letter, and I mean to read it aloud to our mother. And

you may storm and stamp and fume all you like —'tis not of the slightest consequence."

So George, scowling and yet forced to laugh a little, had to listen to all the compliments paid him read out in Betty's rich, ringing young voice, while his mother sat and glowed with pride, and his younger brothers hurrahed after the manner of boys; and when Betty had got through the letter her laughing face suddenly changed to a very serious one, and she ran to George and kissed him all over his cheeks, saying:

"Dear George, it makes me so happy that I both want to laugh and cry—dear, dear brother!"

And George, with tender eyes, kissed Betty in return, so that she knew how much he loved her.

When Madam Washington spoke it was in a voice strangely different from her usually calm, musical tones. She had just got the idol of her heart back from all his dangers, and she was loath to let him go again, and told him so.

"But, mother," answered George, after listening to her respectfully, "when I started upon my campaign last year you told me that you placed me in God's keeping. The God to whom you commended me then defended me from all harm, and I trust He will do so now. Do not you?"

Madam Washington paused, and the rare tears stole down her cheeks.

"You are right, my son," she answered, presently. "I will not say another word to detain you, but will once more give you into the hands of the good God to take care of for me."

That night, before twelve o'clock, George reported at Alexandria to General Braddock as his aide.

On the 20th of April, near the time that George had set out the year before, General Braddock began his march from Alexandria in Virginia to the mountains of Pennsylvania, where the reduction of Fort Duquesne was his first object. There were two magnificent regiments of crack British troops and ten companies of Virginia troops, hardy and seasoned, and in the highest spirits at the prospect of their young commander being with them. They cheered him vociferously when he appeared riding with General Braddock, and made him blush furiously. But his face grew very long and solemn when he saw the immense train of wagons to carry baggage and stores which he knew were unnecessary, and the general at that very moment was storming because there were not more.

"These," he said, "were furnished by Mr. Franklin, Postmaster-General of Pennsylvania,

and he sends me only a hundred and fifty at that."

"A hundred too many," was George's thought.

The march was inconceivably slow. Never since George could remember had he so much difficulty in restraining his temper as on that celebrated march. As he said afterwards, "Every mole-hill had to be levelled, and bridges built across every brook." General Braddock wished to march across the trackless wilderness of the Alleghanies as he did across the flat plains of Flanders, and he spent his time in constructing a great military road when he should have been pushing ahead. So slow was their progress that in reaching Winchester George was enabled to make a détour and go to Greenway Court for a few hours. The delight of Lord Fairfax and Lance was extreme, but in a burst of confidence George told them the actual state of affairs.

"What you tell me," said the earl, gravely, "determines me to go to the low country, for if this expedition results disastrously I can be of more use at Williamsburg than here. But, my dear George, I am concerned for you, because you look ill. You are positively gaunt, and you look as if you had not eaten for a week."

"Ill!" cried George, beginning to walk up and

down the library, and clinching and unclinching his fists nervously. "My lord, it is my heart and soul that are ill. Can you think what it is to watch a general, brave but obstinate, and blind to the last degree, rushing upon disaster? Upon my soul, sir, those English officers think, I verily believe, that the Indians are formed into regiments and battalions, with a general staff and a commissary, and God knows what!" And George raved a while longer before he left to ride back to Winchester, with Billy riding after him. This outbreak was so unlike George, he looked so strange, his once ruddy face was so pallid at one moment and so violently flushed at another that the earl and Lance each felt an unspoken dread that his strong body might give way under the strain upon it.

George galloped back into Winchester that night. Both his horse and Billy's were dripping wet, and as he pulled his horse almost up on his haunches Billy said, in a queer voice:

"Hi, Marse George, d'yar blood on yo' bridle. You rid dat hoss hard, sho' nough!"

"Hold your tongue!" shouted George, in a tone that Billy had never heard from him before; and then, in the next minute, he said, confusedly, "I did not mean to speak so, but my head is in a whirl; I think I must be ill."

And as he spoke he reeled in his saddle, and would have fallen had not Billy run forward and caught him. He staggered into the house where he had lodgings, and got into his bed, and by midnight he was raving with fever.

Billy had sense enough to go for Dr. Craik, George's old acquaintance, who had volunteered as surgeon to General Braddock's staff. He was a bright-eyed, determined-looking man, still young, but skilled in his profession. By morning the fever was reduced, and Dr. Craik was giving orders about the treatment as he sat by George's bedside, for the army was to resume its march that day.

"Your attack is sharp," said the doctor, "but you have an iron constitution, and with ordinary care you will soon be well."

George, pale and haggard, but without fever, listened to the doctor's directions with a half-smile. The troops were already on the move; outside could be heard the steady tramp of feet, the thunder of horses' hoofs, the roll of artillery-wagons, and the commotion of an army on the move. In a few moments the doctor left him, saying:

"I think you will shortly be able to rejoin the army, Colonel Washington."

"I think so, too," answered George.

As soon as the doctor was out of the room George turned to Billy and said:

"Help me on with my clothes, and as soon as the troops are well out of the town fetch the horses."

When the soldiers halted at noon, General Braddock, sitting under a tree by the road-side, was asking Dr. Craik's opinion of the time that Colonel Washington could rejoin, when around the corner of a huge bowlder rode George with Billy behind him. He was very pale, but he could sit his horse. He could not but laugh at the doctor's angry face, but said deprecatingly to him:

"I would have fretted myself more ill had I remained at Winchester, for I am not by nature patient, and I have been ill so little that I do not know how to be ill."

"I see you don't," was the doctor's dry reply.

For four days George kept up with the army, and managed, in spite of burning fevers, of a horrible weakness and weariness, of sleepless nights racked with pain, to ride his horse. On the fifth he was compelled to take to a covered wagon. There, on a rough bed, with Billy holding his burning head, he was jolted along for ten days more, each day more agonizing than the one before. In that terrible time master and

man seemed to have changed places. It was George who was fretful and unreasonable and wildly irritable, while Billy, the useless, the lazy, the incorrigible, nursed him with a patience, a tenderness, a strange intelligence that amazed all who saw it, and was even dimly felt by George. The black boy seemed able to do altogether without sleep. At every hour of the day and night he was awake and alert, ready to do anything for the poor sufferer. As the days passed on, and George grew steadily worse, the doctor began to look troubled. In his master's presence Billy showed no sign of fear, but he would every day follow Dr. Craik when he left, and ask him, with an ashy face:

"Marse doctor, is Marse George gwi' die?"

"I hope not. He is young and strong, and God is good."

"Ef he die, an' I go home, what I gwi' say when mistis come out and say, 'Billy, wh'yar yo' Marse George?'" And at that Billy would throw himself on the ground in a paroxysm of grief that was piteous to see. The doctor carefully concealed from the soldiers George's real condition. But after four or five days of agony a change set in, and within the week George was able to sit up and even ride a little. The wagons had kept with the rear division of the army,

but George knew that General Braddock, with twelve hundred picked men, had gone ahead and must be near Fort Duquesne. On the fourteenth day, in the evening, when the doctor came he found his patient walking about. He was frightfully thin and pale, but youth and strength and good habits were beginning to assert themselves. He was getting well.

"Doctor," said he, "this place is about fifteen miles from Fort Duquesne. I know it well, and from this hour I emancipate myself from you. This day I shall report for duty."

The next morning, the 9th of July, 1755, dawned beautifully, and the first long lances of light revealed a splendid sight on the banks of the Monongahela. On one side flowed the great river in majestic beauty. Following the shores was a kind of natural esplanade, while a little way off the rich woods, within which dwelt forever a purple twilight, overhung this charming open space. And along this open space marched, in exquisite precision, two thousand of England's crack troops—cavalry, infantry, and artillery—and a thousand bronzed Virginia soldiery to the music of the fife and drum. Often in after-years George Washington was heard to say that the most beautiful sight his eyes ever rested on was the sight of Braddock's army at sunrise on

that day of blood. Officers and men were in the highest spirits; they expected within a few hours to be in sight of Fort Duquesne, where glory, as they thought, awaited their coming. Even George's apprehensions of the imprudence of this mode of attack were soothed. He rode by General Braddock's side, and was by far the most conspicuous figure there for grace and nobility. His illness seemed to have departed in a night, and he was the same erect, soldierly form, fairly dwarfing every one contrasted with him. As the general and his first aide rode together, General Braddock said, confidently:

"Colonel Washington, in spite of your warning, see how far we have come upon our way without disaster. The danger of an attack by Indians is now passed, and we have but to march a few miles more and glory is ours."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when there was one sharp crack of a gun, followed by a fierce volley, and fifty men dropped in their tracks. But there was no enemy visible. The shots were like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky.

"The Indians," said George, in a perfectly composed voice, reining up his horse.

"I see no Indians," cried General Braddock, excitedly. "There is disorder in the ranks; have

them closed up at once, and march in double time. We will soon find the enemy."

But the firing from the invisible foe again broke forth, this time fiercer and more murderous than before. General Braddock, riding to the head of the first regiment, which had begun to waver, shouted the order for them to reform and fire. The veteran troops, as coolly as if on parade, closed up their ranks, and gave a volley, but it was as if fired in the air. They saw no enemy to fire at. Meanwhile the Virginia troops, after the first staggering effect of a terrific musketry fire poured into them by an unseen enemy, suddenly broke ranks, and, each man running for a tree, they took possession of the skirts of the woods. On seeing this General Braddock galloped up to George.

"Colonel Washington," he cried, violently, "your Virginia troops are insubordinate! They have scattered themselves through the woods, and I desire them formed again in columns of fours to advance."

"Sir," answered George, in agony, "the ravines are full of Indians — many hundreds of them. They can slaughter us at their pleasure if we form in the open. The Virginians know how to fight them."

"You are an inexperienced soldier, sir, and

therefore I excuse you. But look at my English veterans—see how they behave—and I desire the Virginians to do the same."

At that moment George's horse fell upon his knees, and the next he rolled over, shot through the heart. The English regiments had closed up manfully, after receiving several destructive volleys, returning the fire of their assailants without seeing them and without producing the smallest effect. But suddenly the spectacle of half their men dead or wounded on the ground, the galloping about of riderless horses, the shrieks of agony that filled the air, seemed to unman them. They broke and ran in every direction. In vain General Braddock rode up to them, actually riding over them, waving his sword and calling to them to halt.

The men who had faced the legions of Europe were panic-stricken by this dreadful unseen foe, and fled, only to be shot down in their tracks. To make it more terrible, the officers were singled out for slaughter, and out of eighty-six officers in a very little while twenty-six were killed and thirty-seven wounded. General Braddock himself had his horse shot under him, and as he rolled on the ground a cry of pain was wrung from him by two musket-balls that pierced his body. Of his three aides, two lay weltering

in their blood, and George alone was at his side helping him to rise.

Rash and obstinate as General Braddock might be, he did not lack for courage, and in that awful time he was determined to fight to the last.

"Get me another horse," he said, with difficulty, to George. "Are you, too, wounded?"

"No, general, but I have had two horses shot under me. Here is my third one—mount!" And by the exertion of an almost superhuman strength he raised General Braddock's bulky figure from the ground and placed him in the saddle.

"I am badly wounded," said General Braddock, as he reeled slightly; "but I can sit my horse yet. Your Virginians are doing nobly, but they should form in columns."

Besotted to the end, but seeing that the Virginians alone were standing their ground, General Braddock did not give a positive order, and George did not feel obliged to obey this murderous mistake. But General Braddock, after a gasp or two, turned a livid face towards George.

"Colonel Washington, the command is yours. I am more seriously wounded than I thought." He swayed forward, and but for George would have fallen from his horse.

The panic was now at its height. Men, horses, wagons, all piled together in a terrible mêlée,

made for the rear; but there, again, they were met by a hail of bullets. Staggered, they rushed back, only to be again mowed down by the hidden enemy. The few officers left commanded, begged, and entreated the men to stand firm; but they, who had faced death upon a hundred fields, were now so mad with fear that they were incapable of obedience. George, who had managed to have General Braddock carried to the rear with the aid of Dr. Craik, had got another horse, and riding from one end of the bloody field to the other, did all that mortal man could do to rally the panic-stricken men, but it was in vain. His clothes were riddled with bullets, but in the midst of the carnage around him he was unharmed, and rode over the field like the embodied spirit of battle.

The Virginians alone, cool and determined, fought steadily and sold their lives dearly, although picked off one by one. At last, after hours of panic, flight, and slaughter, George succeeded in bringing off the remnant of the Virginians, and, overtaking the fleeing mob of regular troops some miles from the scene of the conflict, got them across the ford of the Monongahela. They were safe from pursuit, for the handful of Frenchmen could not persuade their Indian allies to leave the plunder of the battle-field for

the pursuit of the enemy. The first thing that George did was to send immediately for wagons, which had been left behind, to transport the wounded. General Braddock, still alive but suffering agonies from his wounds, was carried on horseback, then in a cart, and at last, the jolting being intolerable, on a litter upon the shoulders of four sturdy backwoodsmen. But he was marked for death. On the third day of this terrible retreat, towards sunset, he sank into a lethargy. George, who had spent every moment possible by his side, turned to Dr. Craik, who shook his head significantly—there was no hope. As George dismounted and walked by the side of the litter, the better to hear any words the dying soldier might utter, General Braddock roused a little.

"Colonel Washington," he said, in a feeble voice, "I am satisfied with your conduct. We have had bad fortune—very bad fortune; but"—here his mind began to wander—"yonder is the smoke rising from the chimneys; we shall soon be home and at rest. Good-night, Colonel Washington—"

The men with the litter stopped. George, with an overburdened heart, watched the last gasp of a rash but brave and honorable soldier, and presently gently closed his eyes. That

"GEORGE DID ALL THAT MORTAL MAN COULD DO"

night the body of General Braddock, wrapped in his military cloak, was buried under a great oak-tree in the woods by the side of the highway, and before daylight the mournful march was resumed.

The news of the disaster had preceded them, and when George, attended only by Captain Vanbraam and a few of his Virginia officers, rode into Williamsburg on an August evening, it was with the heaviest heart he had ever carried in his bosom. But by one of those strange paradoxes, ever existing in the careers of men of destiny, the events that had brought ruin to others only served to exalt him personally. His gallant conduct in battle, his miraculous escape, his bringing off of the survivors, especially among the Virginia troops, and the knowledge which had come about that had his advice been heeded the terrible disaster would not have taken place—all conspired to make him still more of a popular hero. Not only his own men adored him, and pointed out that he had saved all that could be saved on that dreadful day, but the British troops as well saw that the glory was his, and the return march was one long ovation to the one officer who came out of the fight with a greater reputation than when he entered it. Everywhere crowds met him with acclama-

tions and with tears. The streets of the quaint little town of Williamsburg were filled with people on this summer evening, who followed the party of officers, with George at their head, to the palace. George responded to the shouts for him by bowing gracefully from side to side.

Arrived at the palace he dismounted, and, just as the sentry at the main door presented arms to him, he saw a party coming out, and they were the persons he most desired to see in the world and least expected. First came the Earl of Fairfax with Madam Washington, whom he was about to hand down the steps and into his coach, which had not yet driven up. Behind them demurely walked Betty, and behind Betty came Lance, carrying the mantles of the two ladies.

The earl and Madam Washington, engaged in earnest conversation, did not catch sight of George until Betty had rushed forward, and crying out in rapture, "George, dear George!" they saw the brother and sister clasped in each other's arms.

Madam Washington stood quite still, dumfounded with joy, until George, kissing her hand tenderly, made her realize that it was indeed he, her best beloved, saved from almost universal destruction and standing before her. She, the

calmest, the stateliest of women, trembled, and had to lean upon him for support; the earl grasped his hand; Lance was in waiting. George was as overcome with joy as they were.

"But I must ask at once to see the governor," said he, after the first rapture of meeting was over. "You, my lord, must go with me, for I want friends near me when I tell the story of sorrow and disaster."

Four days afterwards, the House of Burgesses being in session, Colonel Washington was summoned by the Speaker to read his report of the campaign before it, and to be formally designated as commander-in-chief of the forces. The facts were already known, but it was thought well, in order to arouse the people to the sense of their danger, and to provide means for carrying on the war in defence of their frontiers, that Colonel Washington should make a public report, and should publicly receive the appointment of commander-in-chief of the next expedition. The House of Burgesses, then as ever, proudly insistent of its rights, had given the governor to understand that they would give him neither money nor supplies unless their favorite soldier should have the command in the next campaign—and, indeed, the attitude of the offi-

cers and soldiery made this absolutely necessary. Even the governor had realized this, and, disheartened by the failure of his much-heralded regulars, was in a submissive mood, and these haughty colonial legislators, of whose republican principles Governor Dinwiddie already complained much, took this opportunity to prove that without their co-operation but little could be done.

The large hall of the House of Burgesses, but dimly lighted by small diamond-paned windows, was filled with the leading men of the colony, including Lord Fairfax. Ladies had been admitted to the floor, and among them sat in majestic beauty Madam Washington, and next her sat Betty, palpitating, trembling, blushing, and with proud, bright eyes awaited the entrance of her "darling George," as she called him, although often reproved for her extravagance by her mother.

At last George entered this august assembly. His handsome head was uncovered, showing his fair hair. He wore a glittering uniform, and his sword, given him by Lord Fairfax, hung at his side. He carried himself with that splendid and noble air that was always his characteristic, and, quietly seating himself, awaited the interrogatory of the president. When this was made he

rose respectfully and began to read from manuscript the sad story of Braddock's campaign. It was brief, but every sentence thrilled all who heard it. When he said, in describing the terrible story of the 9th of July, "The officers in general behaved with incomparable bravery, for which they suffered, upwards of sixty being killed or wounded," a kind of groan ran through the great assemblage; and when he added, in a voice shaken with emotion, "The Virginia companies behaved like men and died like soldiers; for, I believe, out of three companies on the ground that day scarce thirty men were left alive," sobs were heard, and many persons, both men and women, burst into tears.

His report being ended, the president of the House of Burgesses arose and addressed him:

"Colonel Washington: We have listened to your account of the late campaign with feelings of the deepest and most poignant sorrow, but without abandoning in any way our intention to maintain our lawful frontiers against our enemies. It has been determined to raise sixteen companies in this colony for offensive and defensive warfare, and by the appointment of his excellency the governor, in deference to the will of the people and the desire of the soldiers, you are hereby appointed, by this commission

from his excellency the governor, which I hold in my hand, commander-in-chief of all the forces now raised or to be raised by this colony, reposing special confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct, and fidelity. And you are hereby invested with power and authority to act as you shall think for the good of the service.

"And we hereby strictly charge all officers and soldiers under your command to be obedient to your orders and diligent in the exercise of their several duties.

"And we also enjoin and require you to be careful in executing the great trust reposed in you, by causing strict discipline and order to be observed in the army, and that the soldiers be duly exercised and provided with all necessaries.

"And you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war, and punctually to observe and follow such orders and directions as you shall receive from his excellency the governor and this or other House of Burgesses, or committee of the House of Burgesses."

A storm of applause broke forth, and George stood silent, trembling and abashed, with a noble diffidence. He raised one hand in deprecation, and it was taken to mean that he would speak, and a solemn hush fell upon the assembly. But in the perfect silence he felt himself

unable to utter a word, or even to lift his eyes from the floor. The president sat in a listening attitude for a whole minute, then he said:

"Sit down, Colonel Washington. Your modesty is equal to your valor, and both are above comparison. Your life would not have been spared, as if by a miracle, had not the All-wise Ruler of the heavens and the earth designed that you should fulfil your great destiny; and one day, believe me, you shall be called the prop, the stay, and the glory of your country."

THE END

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